

## Contact

Asari Beale, Director of Communications  
LSA Family Health Service  
646.672-5200/comms@lsafhs.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LSA Family Health Services Raises \$1.4 Million

*Spirit of East Harlem gala honors Joseph Tahl, Jean Ackerman, Sr. Margaret Leonard at the Pierre*

October 19, 2015 – New York, NY – The *Spirit of East Harlem* gala for LSA Family Health Service exceeded expectations, raising \$1.4 million for the organization's food pantry, education, and health services.

The success of the gala comes in large part due to the endorsement of its honorees. Real estate developer **Joseph A. Tahl**, Co-Founder and President of Tahl Propp Equities, received a Corporate Spirit Award. With his help, the event garnered significant support from the real estate industry.

"Today, I am very proud to receive LSA's Corporate Spirit Award, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with LSA in sustaining families in need and strengthening our neighborhoods," said Tahl.

A Lifetime Spirit Award was presented to **Sister Margaret Leonard**, founder and longtime Board Member of LSA Family Health Service. Philanthropist **Jean Ackerman** was presented with a Community Spirit Award for her sustaining contributions made to the agency over the last 15 years.

City Council Speaker **Melissa Mark Viverito** attended the gala in a show of support for the agency, known by many as "Little Sisters" for the Little Sisters of the Assumption Order which founded the organization in 1958. LSA is located in the Speaker's district of East Harlem and was one of three lead agencies supporting families following the 2014 gas explosion.

Handmade paper flower centerpieces brightened the dinner tables: these flowers were made by mothers in the agency's Parenting and Child Development program who made the same flowers for Pope Francis's recent visit to East Harlem. Another highlight was a live performance by mothers in LSA's Building Bridges support group. The mothers performed a Colombian dance called Bullerengue accompanied by live drumming. Guests shook maracas and clapped along to the festive performance.

The Spirit of East Harlem gala was chaired by Mark and Cecilia Vonderheide and Scott and Kateri DePetris; It was co-chaired by Thomas and Paula McInerney. Lead corporate sponsors included: L+M Developers, Eastern Consolidated, Phillips Nizer LLP, Portware, FPS Group, and Bluff Point Associates.

More than 400 guests were in attendance. The gala exceeds expectations and sets a fundraising record for LSA Family Health Service. It also marks the one year anniversary of its CEO Traci Lester, with the agency.

PHOTOS

*Additional photos/high-res photos available upon request.*



Joseph Tahl, Co-founder and President of Tahl Propp Equities (l) and Scott DePetris, Chairman of the LSA Family Health Service Board of Directors (r)



New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito (center) with Sister Susanne LaChapelle (l) and Sister Annette Allain (r), both members of the Little Sisters of the Assumption



Cecilia Vonderheide, Chair of the Spirit of East Harlem gala and LSA Family Health Service Board member presents a Lifetime Spirit Award to Sister Margaret Leonard



LSA Family Health Service Board member Paula McNerney (r) presents a Community Spirit Award to philanthropist Jean Ackerman (l)

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**LSA Family Health Service (LSA)**, founded by the Little Sisters of the Assumption in 1958, is a nonprofit, neighborhood-based organization that works with the people of East Harlem and beyond to address the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual dimensions of family health. Our home-based and center-based programs are designed to empower those who are most vulnerable and who have least access to the basic necessities of life, in the conviction that the entire community grows when individuals and families are affirmed in their own dignity. Learn more at [www.littlesistersfamily.org](http://www.littlesistersfamily.org).