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**AIDS WALK SAN FRANCISCO MEETS ITS FUNDING BENCHMARKS
FOR LOCAL HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS, INCLUDING INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT
LONG-TERMS SURVIVORS OF HIV**

More than \$2.1 Million Raised at Northern California's Largest AIDS Fundraising Event

SAN FRANCISCO, July 17, 2016 – A massive crowd gathered in Golden Gate Park for the highly anticipated 30th annual AIDS Walk San Francisco (AWSF) on Sunday.

The target benchmarks set by the new AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation Board were met for this year's three primary beneficiaries. Participants raised funds that will launch a ground-breaking new model of specialized care at **San Francisco General Hospital's Ward 86** for long-term survivors of HIV, known as the Golden Compass program. Proceeds will also help **Project Open Hand** provide meals for people living with HIV who need support, and assist **Project Inform** in its mission to ensure that all HIV-positive people have access to affordable, effective care and treatment.

Additional resources will go to many other Bay Area AIDS service organizations in the form of grants as well as money raised by their own team fundraising efforts. Organizers estimate that about 10,000 walkers filled Sharon Meadow on the brisk morning before setting off on the 10K route.

"This has been a remarkable day for AIDS Walk San Francisco," said **Craig Miller**, AIDS Walk Founder and Senior Organizer. "Today's total of \$2,139,398 is helping to address the greatest unmet needs in today's fight against HIV/AIDS, care for the most vulnerable among us, and fund vital work that will, with our collective and continued support, bring the epidemic to an end."

Dr. Paul Volberding, internationally renowned and pioneering HIV/AIDS specialist who co-founded Ward 86 in 1983, addressed the crowd live via telephone from the International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa.

"We are so proud of all we have done in San Francisco to begin to end the epidemic," said Dr. Volberding. "Support from everyone at the AIDS Walk will help ensure that the progress we have made will continue. We thank you for your efforts."

Tom Battioaglia, a long-term survivor of HIV who will be assisted by the new AIDS Walk-funded Ward 86 initiative, also had the opportunity to speak to participants. "The Golden Compass

program will give the staff at Ward 86 new options to help patients like me thrive,” said Battioaglia. “Because of your commitment today, you are giving seniors living with HIV hope.”

“Every single day, we serve 1,000 HIV-positive clients one, two, three meals a day to make sure that they can take their meds, so that they can feel like they’re a part of our world – and they make our world better for it,” said **Mark Ryle**, Chief Executive Officer of Project Open Hand. “We are grateful for what AIDS Walk San Francisco participants do, and we are proud to be one of the beneficiaries this year.”

“Because you are walking today, Project Inform is able to do critical work that supports the effort to find a cure for HIV,” said **Dana Van Gorder**, Executive Director of Project Inform. “With your help, we are also engaging in extensive education to make sure that people with HIV know how and when to treat their infection, and how to live well with HIV.”

“On behalf of the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation Board, we are humbled and honored to act as the stewards of this important Bay Area tradition,” said Chair **Serafina Palandech**. “The perseverance, strength, and compassion of the people who gather here each year is awesomely inspiring. Thank you for your determined support.”

Since 1987, AIDS Walk San Francisco has raised more than \$86 million for life-changing HIV/AIDS services, prevention, and advocacy efforts in the Bay Area and beyond, and has grown into the largest AIDS fundraising event in Northern California.

Notable guests at the event’s Opening Ceremony included **Dan Ashley** (ABC7 News Anchor), Emmy-winning TV personality, **Carson Kressley**, **Dr. Paul Volberding** and **Dr. Dan Wlodarczyk** of UCSF’s Ward 86, **Dana Van Gorder** (Project Inform), **Mark Ryle** (Project Open Hand), Board Members of the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation, and **Craig R. Miller** (AIDS Walk Founder and Senior Organizer).

The morning program also featured performances by Broadway singers **Joan Ryan**, singing “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” and **Leslie McDonel**, singing “True Colors.”

Elected officials in attendance included San Francisco Supervisor **Scott Wiener** and San Francisco Treasurer **José Cisneros**.

Corporate supporters included Premier Sponsors **Gilead Sciences** and **Quest Diagnostics**; Grand Sponsor **ABC7**; and Principal Sponsors **96.5 KOIT**, **102.9 KBLX**, **Bio-Rad**, **Chevron**, **Crescent Heights**, **Levi Strauss & Co.**, **San Francisco Marriott Marquis**, **Team Cannabis**, **Wells Fargo**, and **Williams-Sonoma, Inc.**

The Post-Walk Concert featured **PUSH** fronted by Dan Ashley, **The Unlikely Heroes**, as well as tunes spun by **DJ Noel**.

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About the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation: The AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation is the governing body of AIDS Walk San Francisco. It is composed of a [Board of Directors](#) intimately familiar with the Walk and the communities it serves. The Board oversees the event's production and finances as well as determines how the event's net proceeds are distributed. Beneficiaries of each year's AIDS Walk are determined by the Board well in advance of the event to ensure an informed community of participants and donors.

About AIDS Walk San Francisco: Since 1987, AIDS Walk San Francisco has raised more than \$86 million for lifesaving HIV prevention, testing, and care programs and services, and has grown into the largest AIDS fundraising event in Northern California. AIDS Walk San Francisco has become a Bay Area tradition, bringing together tens of thousands of participants and volunteers; hundreds of corporate, community, and friends and family teams; and hundreds of thousands of donors from the Bay Area and across the country. AIDS Walk San Francisco is a project of the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation. This year's event benefits the [Project Inform](#), [Project Open Hand](#), the [UCSF's Ward 86](#), and many other Bay Area AIDS service organizations. For more information, visit sf.aidswalk.net.

About MZA Events: AIDS Walk San Francisco was founded in 1987 by Craig R. Miller and his organization of activists, MZA Events. Miller is the AIDS Walk originator and has produced hundreds of public service campaigns and fundraising events, generating more than \$400 million for major AIDS organizations throughout the country. For more information, please visit www.mzaevents.com.