

2014 OUTSTANDING ARTS ADVOCATE AWARD

Dr. James Gallagher

Originally from Staten Island, Dr. Gallagher graduated from Villanova, and NYU after serving as an Infantry sergeant in Korea. His work experience included public relations, corporate consulting, higher education and philanthropy. He founded and managed a human resources firm that grew to the fourth largest of its kind and also served as executive director of the John LaFarge Institute in New York City, president of an innovative New Jersey private college, and chair of the board asset and liability committee for Crestmont Savings, a \$1.4 billion NJ bank. He served on boards of ten social service and professional non-profits, and as CEO of six. He is now a board member of Covenant House, New Jersey, and manager of a family foundation, of which his daughters are trustees.

In the summer of 2005, Jim sat in on a workshop for adolescent girls led by teaching artists Carolyn Hunt and Paula Davidoff. It was a hot, cramped, windowless room as the teachers led a group of three girls through a series of playwriting, storytelling and acting exercises. Their goal was to guide the girls in a process that would help them craft a play about their experiences growing up; perform the play themselves and discuss it with a community audience. Jim saw the value in the work and has supported it in countless ways ever since. Today, what started as a volunteer workshop series, is a well-established, year-long program called *Girls Surviving* ... thanks to his foresight. *Girls Surviving* helps teenage girls learn to work together, speak out about their lives through writing and performance, and include the community in a dialogue about the issues that matter to them.

As the father and grandfather of girls, Jim has the wisdom and vision to understand the importance of helping girls discover their unique voices and he has provided unwavering support, helping Girls Surviving positively impact the lives of dozens of girls, their families, friends and community. In their own words, some of the current *Girls Surviving* troupe want to thank and honor this generous advocate:

From a Junior: I've been in *Girls Surviving* since the summer of my eighth grade year. He (Dr. Gallagher) has given the group opportunities of a lifetime.

And, from a Freshman:

Dear Dr. Gallagher, You have made us one big family. Throughout the years I have been involved with *Girls Surviving*, an amount of security, comfort, and confidence has been built back up in my life. My childhood was rough and growing (up) is even harder, especially when you don't have anyone to give you advice and help through the bad times. *Girls Surviving* has given me the support and encouragement I needed to make it through my teen years.

Therefore, for his conviction that the arts can help teens successfully navigate difficult times, for his deep understanding of the unique challenges facing teenage girls in particular and for his steadfast support and advocacy for the arts through such programs as *Girls Surviving*, Morris Arts is delighted to award the 2014 Outstanding Arts Advocate Award to Dr. James Gallagher.

Would Jim please come up to receive his award.

<< Jim has remarks >>

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