

iCare Gala for Care Communities at Holiday Inn Midtown

By [Michael Barnes](#) | Friday, August 26, 2011, 11:26 AM

It happened again. I choked up during the testimonials and acceptance speeches at the iCare Gala for [Care Communities](#). No doubt because the sustaining subtext for this charity is that: "Nobody should die alone."



Jason Laufenberg and Amanda Chiampi

In case you missed previous postings, this group mobilizes teams of caregivers for those with conditions related to cancer and HIV/AIDS. They do chores, provide rides and add to a sometimes thin personal support network. Most of the teams come from local faith communities, and the vast majority of those are drawn from Catholic, Jewish and mainstream Protestant denominations.

The gala moved this year to the Holiday Inn Midtown, a lonely midrise near Highland Mall formerly known, I believe, as the Airport Marriott, back when the airport was arguably nearby. Its meeting and banqueting facilities have been spruced up and appeared just the right size and style for this relatively informal gala. (With Austin Community College expanding its footprint in the area, with hoped-for landscape improvements, this hotel should pop up on more radars.)

iCare follows the established formula of such charity galas: Silent auction, buffet, video, live auction, awards. Auctioneer **Victoria Gutierrez** made new fans with what a tablemate of mine called her "present" state. That's one reason she's raised more than \$20 million to date.

The Byron E. Cox Spirit of Caring awards went to **Jim Lommori**, Rabbi **Steven Folberg** and **Sandra Goldman**. Then **Sally Mills Watkins** took the Guardian of Caring Award.

If the evening went a tad long, it wasn't because the auction, video or speeches were anything less than engaging.

Candice Towe and Gary Cooper



Tony D'anna and Julie Killingsworth

