MEET
Annette M. Hines,
2021 Theresa Award Honoree

The modesty of Theresa Award winners is astonishing. Annette Hines is no exception. Upon learning that she was the recipient of this year’s Theresa Award, Annette was honored, of course… and more than a little surprised.

“I looked at the list of past Theresa Award recipients and thought to myself these people are legends. I’m not even in the same league,” said Annette.

As you will see, Annette is not just in the same league, she is an all-star. And she shares something else with many Theresa Award winners: the compassion, empathy, and commitment born of personal experience. One of Annette’s daughters, Elizabeth, passed away from Mitochondrial disease at the age of 17. Annette’s first-hand knowledge of the challenges they faced fuels her passion for comprehensive Special Needs Planning and her drive to advocate for the special needs community anyway she can.

Annette decided early in her career to focus on helping elders and people with disabilities. She is the founding partner of Special Needs Law Group of Massachusetts, PC and has been practicing in the areas of Special Needs Planning, Elder Law, and Estate Planning for over 20 years. Annette was designated a 2016 Top Women of Law from Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly and has been named to the Massachusetts Super Lawyers list every year since 2014.

Annette’s commitment to the special needs community goes far beyond the practice of law. She has been recognized as a Distinguished Citizen by ARC Massachusetts and cited for public service by both the Massachusetts State Senate and House of Representatives. She created Special Families, Special Care (now known as Shriver Clinical Services) to provide nursing care for children with special needs.
Annette is a frequent expert speaker and a regular contributor to ThriveGlobal. She is a host of the weekly podcast “Parenting Impossible: The Special Needs Survival Podcast,” where she offers inspiration, support, expertise, and wide-ranging discussions to help families support their loved ones with special needs. The podcast has listeners in 30 countries who actively correspond with Annette and one another. In addition, Annette hosts a rapidly growing interactive Facebook group called Circle of Care, which is comprised of over 400 members from around the world. And she is the author of “Butterflies and Second Chances: A Mom’s Memoir of Love and Loss,” the inspiring true story of a mother’s special needs journey and her struggle to secure the best possible life for her child in the face of bureaucratic resistance and marital crisis.

Annette sits on a Human Rights Committee associated with Advocates, a Massachusetts organization dedicated to ensuring people with special needs receive the support they need in a dignified manner. Last, but certainly not least, Annette generously donates her time and legal expertise to a wide range of issues impacting the special needs community, including access to affordable housing, reliable medical care, and meaningful employment opportunities.

When asked what she considers the greatest honor she has ever received, Annette did not hesitate: Being the mother of two daughters and the time she was able to share with Elizabeth.

All of us at the Theresa Foundation would like to thank Annette for her tireless and passionate advocacy on behalf of people with special needs. Naming her this year’s winner of the Theresa Award is the least we can do in return.
If you missed the Theresa Foundation’s Virtual Comedy Night with Derrick Tennent on March 12th, you missed a real treat. Derrick was a promising athlete who laid down one night and woke up three days later to brain surgery and a coma and years of rehabilitation to relearn the basics like walking and talking, leaving him paralyzed on his left side. He uses his disability and sense of humor to challenge others to take advantage of every opportunity as he shares his mission to “Live Simply. Love Completely.”

Derrick also emphasized the importance of family and friends in his recovery process. He introduced his younger sister, Julie, and credited her with chiding him through his recovery process.

Julie Tennent was born with “The Love Chromosome” and is on a mission to share it with everyone she meets! She stole the show with her sense of humor as she challenged everyone to “Love Life” and “Love Wastefully” then shared the fact that she sells t-shirts featuring her mottos. Julie is a powerful force of compassion and inspiration mixed with drive and determination.

Her shirts can be viewed and purchased at www.Juliescoolshirts.com.

This zoom event was a huge success! It was attended by approximately 75 people and raised over $4,000! Many of the participants enjoyed delicious popcorn from Popcorn for the People during the show. Popcorn for the People is a nonprofit established to create meaningful employment for individuals with Autism and Disabilities. Check them out at www.popcornforthepeople.com.

Many thanks to Derrick and Julie for all the smiles and laughs and to Dave Hungerford, our 50/50 raffle winner, who donated the funds back to the Foundation. We greatly appreciate the support of Joe Liana for sponsoring the event and Russo Law Group for being our popcorn sponsor.
Swinging Fore Theresa Golf Outing
10:00 am check-in
12:00 pm Shot Gun Tee Off

Thursday, June 24, 2021
North Hills Country Club
Manhasset, NY