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Genome Magazine Kicks Off National Essay Contest to Honor Genetic Counselors

(May 15, 2017) Plano, TX. – After receiving an overwhelming response to last year’s call for entries, *Genome* magazine’s Code Talker Award honoring genetic counselors is back for 2017. This unique award spotlights the impact of genetic counselors on the health and lives of their patients. Nominations are made via essay, with finalists and winner to be presented at the 2017 National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) Annual Conference on September 15, 2017, in Columbus, Ohio, at a gala ceremony hosted by emcee Julia Sweeney. The Code Talker Award is the first of its kind for the field of genetic counseling and is sponsored by Invitae, one of the fastest growing genetic information companies.

The magazine is now seeking nomination essays from patients, caregivers, and peers detailing the compassion, expertise, and support a genetic counselor has demonstrated and the resulting impact that their care and guidance had on a patient or his or her family. Essays will be accepted through May 22, 2017. Nomination essays can be submitted at <http://genomemag.com/codetalker/>.

“After struggling for a diagnosis [for] so many years, and Allison putting up with me and my case for so long, it felt amazing to publicly 'yell from the rooftops' about how thankful I was for her,” says Melissa Bruebach, who wrote a moving essay nominating her genetic counselor for the 2016 Code Talker. “The whole moment was magic,” says Bruebach. “She got the recognition she deserved, I got to tell her how grateful I was for her and the genetics team at Lurie Children’s Hospital, and I got the chance to hopefully inspire hundreds of current and prospective genetic counselors.”

After reviewing the submitted essays, the *Genome* team will assemble a collection of the most impactful stories into the *Code Talkers* book as well as announce three finalists for the award itself. Finalists, their essayists, and their guests will receive round-trip airfare and a two-night stay in Columbus, where they will be honored at an awards ceremony at the conference. The essays will be read aloud, and one genetic counselor will be named *Genome*’s Code Talker of the Year.

“I’m hopeful this award and the many powerful stories it spotlights will continue to highlight the exciting, challenging, and meaningful career of genetic counseling,” says Allison Goetsch, MS, CGC, the winner of the 2016 Code Talker Award. “It is an honor to be in the same profession, working towards the same goals, with so many like-minded, passionate, and dedicated individuals.”

At the end of the ceremony each attendee will receive a copy of the *Code Talkers* book. The book serves as an enduring testament to the important role genetic counselors play in people’s lives and helps patients, genetic counselors, and families all understand the importance of genetic counseling in healthcare today.

“I was really struck by the emotions conveyed in each story. Each patient was so genuinely thankful for his or her genetic counselor and the genetic counseling journey,” says Anna Victorine, MS, CGC, a 2016 Code Talker Award finalist. “It was clear from reading the stories that genetic counselors, as a whole, really and truly care about their patients. The *Code Talkers* book is such an amazing tribute to the profession and our value to our patients.”

For more information about *Genome*'s Code Talker Award, visit genomemag.com/codetalker

About *Genome* magazine

Genome is a national consumer magazine (300,000+ circulation) that explores the complexity of genomics and personalized medicine along with the associated ethical, social, and legal issues — in a relevant and easy-to-understand manner for a lay audience. Its quarterly publication is for the public at large: patients, family, caregivers, and healthcare professionals on the education frontlines. *Genome*'s mission is to empower readers to make informed health decisions that will help them live better and longer. For more information visit genomemag.com.

About Invitae

Invitae Corporation's ([NYSE: NVTA](https://www.nyse.com/quote/NYSE:NVTA)) mission is to bring comprehensive genetic information into mainstream medical practice to improve the quality of healthcare for billions of people. Invitae's goal is to aggregate most of the world's genetic tests into a single service with higher quality, faster turnaround time, and lower price than many single-gene and panel tests today. The company currently provides a diagnostic service comprising approximately 1,500 genes for a variety of genetic disorders associated with oncology, cardiology, neurology, pediatrics, and other rare disease areas, as well as a clinical whole exome analysis service. Additionally, the company has created a Genome Network to connect patients, clinicians, advocacy organizations, researchers, and therapeutic developers to accelerate the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of hereditary disease. For more information, visit our website at invitae.com.

About the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC)

NSGC is the leading voice, authority and advocate for the genetic counseling profession, representing more than 3,500 health care professionals. The organization is committed to ensuring that the public has access to genetic services. For more information visit NSGC.org.