

**“HEARTS OF GOLD” HONOREES FOCUS ON SERVING THOSE MOST IN NEED**

**Contact:** Susan Frost **Jan. 28, 2019**  
541-387-6342  
[Susan.frost@providence.org](mailto:Susan.frost@providence.org)

**WHAT:** Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital Foundation honors community members at the annual **Hearts of Gold** celebration to benefit prevention of heart disease.

**WHEN/  
WHERE:** **6 p.m., Saturday, March 2, 2019**  
Best Western Hood River Inn  
Gorge Room  
1108 E. Marina Drive, Hood River

What does it mean to have a heart of gold? For the 2019 Hearts of Gold honorees, it means a life focused on helping people living on the margins of society. This year’s recipients include Robert Gobbo, M.D., known for focusing his medical skills on underserved communities, and Susan Gabay, a tireless advocate for mental health support and self-sufficiency for community members facing challenges.

**About Dr. Gobbo**

Dr. Gobbo’s life work is largely defined by a moment when he was teaching first aid at age 14 as an Eagle Scout and Boy Scout camp counselor. Dr. Gobbo was fascinated by medicine and following the teachings of his Catholic upbringing, wanted to care for people who needed it most.

Originally from the Bay Area, Dr. Gobbo spent much of his career treating high-risk obstetrics patients and teaching students and peers any time he had the opportunity. The part of him that loves to teach guided him to eventually settle in Hood River where he helped create the Providence Family Medicine Residency program. Residents in the program have the opportunity to learn the full spectrum of primary care, including working in the hospital setting, seeing patients in clinic at One Community Health and going “outside of the walls” to provide care in remote areas or even someone’s home.

Social justice is at the core of Dr. Gobbo's teaching about medicine. He wants residents to be able to practice in all environments and even includes a trip to Guatemala with Providence Health International in the curriculum. He feels the residents need to experience practicing medicine in other cultures to improve the lives of those they serve.

### **About Susan Gabay**

Service to others comes to mind, when you hear the life story of Susan Gabay. She grew up in New York but calls Mosier home. Trained in gerontology, she knew early in her career she wanted to advocate for people in need. She worked for the State of Oregon in a few positions, always focused on removing stigmas and teaching people to provide for themselves. Gabay views her work in more of a charitable nature rather than public service because she truly cared about the people she assisted. She never wanted people to feel bad for asking for what they needed. People labeled as living on "welfare" were associated with negative undertones and she always fought to change that perception.

After working 40 years for the State, and retiring in 2017, Gabay continued volunteer service by advocating for suicide prevention and ending the silence on mental illness based upon a personal tragedy in her life in 2010. She is open about her daughter's battle with depression, identified at age 15, and suffered a great loss when her daughter, Susanna, took her own life. Her daughter achieved many successes in life and was close to graduating from the University of Oregon's Honors College but could not overcome her struggle with depression.

Gabay knows that for many families – regardless of their means or education – living with mental illness without support can be overwhelming. Gabay has sought out ways to help other families facing situations like hers – often it's just making sure they do not feel alone.

Her work with suicide prevention and survivorship has had a major impact on families in the Gorge whose lives have been affected by mental illness. Gabay helped bring NAMI (National Association on Mental Illness) to town to offer monthly support group meetings and Gabay's 1:1 advocacy is available to help families to speak out and ask for help. She has also completed trainings to be certified to assist people who have lost loved ones to suicide and has co-coordinated the annual International Survivors of Suicide Day event in the Gorge the past seven years.

Both winners have spent their lives focusing on serving people living on the margins of society, outside of social norms, experiencing poverty or living with stigma. They share a similar, inner voice that pushes them to advocate for those who cannot always speak for themselves.

**About the event**

Hearts of Gold takes place at 6 p.m., Saturday, March 2 at the Best Western Hood River Inn. In addition to honoring the award winners, guests will be treated to a cocktail reception, live music and a gourmet meal. Tickets are \$85 each and sponsorships are available. Call 541-387-6242 to purchase tickets. All proceeds from the evening benefit Providence's Basecamp program for prevention of heart disease.

###

*Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital is part of Providence Health & Services, the state's leading health system and largest private employer. Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital is a full-service, critical-access hospital with a 24-hour Emergency Department. Providence offers a wide range of health care services in the communities of the Columbia River Gorge through its clinics, care centers and senior living facilities. Visit [www.providence.org/hoodriver](http://www.providence.org/hoodriver).*