

**2017 Impact Award
Aura Kuperberg, PhD**

Aura Kuperberg, PhD brings passion, insight and wisdom to her life's work addressing the psychosocial needs of adolescents and young adults with cancer. It was early in her career, while doing her social work internship at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) in 1979, when she first dreamed of establishing support programs for these vulnerable young people.

Dr. Kuperberg realized her dream during her more than 30 years at CHLA. In 1988, she became founding director of Teen Impact, a renowned program that pioneered the now widely accepted benefits of a holistic healing approach. Recognizing that medical was just one aspect of what these young people must deal with, Dr. Kuperberg initiated a range of support groups and activities that included patients, parents, siblings and peers. She was honored with the CHLA Mary Press Humanism Award in 2000.

Teen Impact introduced retreats that offer self-expression lessons (art, photography, journal writing, improv, dance), relaxation workshops (yoga, meditation, karate) and a dance party complete with DJ, accompanied by trained young adult cancer survivor mentors. Teen Impact also began twice-monthly "therapy in a social package" events that include an informal social hour, a family dinner, and support groups.

Dr. Kuperberg relocated to the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center in 2015, where she is developing a new support program for older adolescents and young adults with cancer, working with patients in the joint CHLA-USC adolescent and young adult program known as AYA@USC.

She earned a PhD and a dual masters' degree in social work and gerontology from USC, having done her undergraduate work at UCLA, and is also a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). Dr. Kuperberg lives in Los Angeles with her husband, who is an entertainment lawyer, and with their two children and three grandchildren living nearby.

