



Depression and Bipolar  
Support Alliance

Contact: Ellen Schantz (312) 988-1162; ESchantz@DBSAAlliance.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance presents Life Unlimited Award to Harvard Student

November 14, 2016, Chicago—The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), the nation's leading peer-directed national organization devoted to depression and bipolar disorder, has presented its 2016 Life Unlimited Award to Miguel Garcia Jr. Garcia received the award on November 12 at the DBSA I to We Leadership Weekend in Akron, Ohio. He is currently a student at Harvard and one of the youngest recipients ever of this award.

DBSA's Life Unlimited Award honors one individual each year who exemplifies a life unlimited by depression or bipolar disorder and who is actively working to help others do the same. Through this award DBSA celebrates the strengths, inspiration, and accomplishments of all people with mood disorders.

Born to a family of Mexican immigrants, Miguel Garcia graduated as valedictorian of his high school class in Detroit and enrolled in Harvard College. During his junior year he experienced a severe onset of bipolar disorder and had to abandon his studies. It was through the challenging process of recovery that he found his life's work.

Equipped with his experiences as a Latino gay male and as someone living with bipolar disorder, Garcia has become a tremendous advocate for marginalized people—LGBTQ, individuals with mental health issues, homeless people, individuals at risk for HIV infections, and other sidelined populations—believing that at the root of many disadvantaged communities lies untreated and ignored mental health issues. And rather than limiting his career and ambitions, he believes his bipolar diagnosis has instilled in him a unique ability to express the compassion and empathy that connects him so deeply to others. Garcia is now back at Harvard and also serves as a peer support specialist for Adult Well-Being Services in Detroit where he works with LGBTQ and youth populations. He plans on becoming a mental health worker, either in social work or public health, to continue his work of de-stigmatizing the discussion around mental health and raising awareness about mental health conditions.

Garcia said, "I am honored and humbled to receive the 2016 DBSA Life Unlimited Award from an organization that emphasizes the power of individuals with mental illness to take control of their lives, contribute to the recovery of others, and create a community of resilient survivors and advocates. I intend to share these lessons as a student leader at Harvard and hopefully one day as a mental health clinician. I am inspired to move forward in honor of Michelle Lee Shirley and our other peers who have lost their lives because of discrimination and misunderstanding. Thank you DBSA for this immense honor."

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder, two of today's most prevalent and devastating mental health conditions. Led by and created for individuals living with these conditions, DBSA provides hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders by providing free, scientifically based tools and information focused on an integrated approach to wellness; supporting research; and working toward equitable treatment for people with mental health conditions. In 2015, DBSA programs and resources directly touched 3.4 million people. For more information go to [www.DBSAAlliance.org](http://www.DBSAAlliance.org).

###