

**DIDI HIRSCH PRESENTS 2015 ERASING THE STIGMA
LEADERSHIP AWARDS**

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



Photo by MC Harris

LACDMH provider Didi Hirsch held the 19th annual *Erasing the Stigma Leadership Awards* at the Beverly Hills Hilton on Thursday, April 23, 2015, to honor courageous men and women who help to ease the pain of suffering from mental illness and substance use, and whose lives testify to overcoming adversity and battling the stigma associated with having a diagnosis.

Four awards were given to the following individuals who have enlightened and inspired rather than perpetuated negative stereotypes about mental illness:

- Songwriter and singer Mary Lambert, was named Mental Health Ambassador
- Howie Mandel, comedian, actor and television host, received the Beatrice Stern Award
- Ryan Anderson, NBA player received a Leadership Award
- Darrell and Jordana Steinberg received Leadership Awards

Comedian Wendy Liebman, hosted the dinner program and introduced the awardees.



Photo by MC Harris

Best known for writing the Grammy nominated song “Same Love” for Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, and for "She Keeps Me Warm," Lambert taught herself how to play piano and write songs at age 6, as an escape from her traumatic and abusive household. Her mother is also a singer-songwriter. Lambert is known to be revealing in her poetry and music, often discussing her early childhood traumas, sexual abuse, bipolar disorder, body image and her sexuality.

Mandel outed himself after performing on the Howard Stern show when he could not open a closed door, due to his obsessive-compulsive disorder. Stern and his crew joked about Howie not being able to leave until they realized he was serious. Leaving the building, Mandel thought his life and career were over—he even contemplated running into traffic to end his life until a man approached him and said, “Me too.” Mandel realized there were many people that needed help just like him.



Photo by MC Harris

Anderson plays professional basketball for the New Orleans Pelicans and was devastated when his girlfriend, actress Gia Allemand, took her own life. Ryan speaks out as a survivor and furthers the message of help for those in need.

The mission at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services is to transform lives by providing quality mental health and substance use services in communities where stigma and poverty limit access.