

Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award Recipients

Ramesh Ayyala, MD

Ophthalmology

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA



Nominators had this to say:

Due to the closure of the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans, the major teaching institution for resident training, Dr. Ayyala sought other avenues to start biweekly clinics in a homeless shelter, with one purpose only – the people of New Orleans needed it. Tulane University and the city of New Orleans are better places with Dr. Ayyala's innovation and creativity working for them. Dr. Ayyala makes us proud to be ophthalmologists.

I have been a program director for over ten years, and a DIO for two. Given the unfortunate short life-cycle of most program directors, I have met many who have held the role of program director, both at Tulane and at a national level. I have seen people who have merely held the position and others who have done something with it. But of them all, there are only a precious few who internalize the position into their soul: seeing it as one of the rare opportunities afforded by life to change this world, to meaningfully integrate oneself into the lives of others. For this select group of program directors, the job becomes a passion, and there is no end to the clock. What work is required is done with pleasure, and what "is the current state of affairs" is deferred to "what could be." When you meet one of these people, you know it. They are the epitome of the irresistible force, for which no object is unmovable. Parker Palmer was one of those people, and so is Ramesh Ayyala. It is fitting that he be recognized with Dr. Palmer's namesake, and it is for this reason, that I offer this nomination with the uppermost of pride and pleasure.