Since 1999, the National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association takes great pleasure in bestowing The Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award. Midge was from New York and started one of the first SD support groups. She starting writing a newsletter called “Our Voice” to share information about SD as well as experiences of people living with SD. She encouraged all of us with SD to think beyond our individual voice problems. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” (Margaret Mead)

In presenting the Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award, we honor the outstanding work of an SD support group. This presentation marks our 18th consecutive presentation. For her work in 2015 and a number of years prior to that, this award this year is given to Carol Doles (pictured) and the Central Virginia SD Support Group. Truly, Carol follows in the footsteps of the late pioneering SD advocate, Midge Kovacs. Carol shared, “I am so humbled. I feel so blessed to be a part of the NSDA. I attribute my ability to cope with SD to all the efforts of our organization. It is so natural to want to tell everyone about it!”

Since relocating from Ohio to Virginia, Carol and her husband, Roger, have worked hard to develop a new support group for Central VA. In Virginia, Carol collaborates with other support groups in her state and invites members to attend World Voice Day events. While living in Columbus, OH, Carol founded the Greater Columbus OH SD Support Group. During the NSDA Eastern Regional Symposium in 2010, Carol served as a panelist for the discussion on living with SD.

Carol also serves the NSDA as member of the Support Group Leader Committee. She was instrumental in the development of the Support Group Topics Workbook, which is one of the resources provided by the NSDA for its leaders. She also serves on the Planning Committee for the NSDA Leadership Days.

In 2010, there was a newspaper article written about Carol overcoming spasmodic dysphonia and her ability to continue teaching. In her words: “Education is important. Before I got my diagnosis, I didn’t know how to help myself. Once I knew, I could take charge. I don’t want people to give up. I want them to know that support is out there.”

Carol also serves the NSDA as Eastern Region & Canada Representative. In this capacity she works with support group leaders in 20 states and in Canada. She dialogs with fellow Support Group Leaders in this expansive region through comprehensive emails that she writes which are filled with resources and tips. She helps other support groups even outside of her Region and communicates with the NSDA regularly. She also corresponds with newly identified SD patients and gives them information about the NSDA and local support options.

In her award-winning essay for the NSDA “Share Your Story Contest”, she commented: “I feel blessed to have SD. Without it, I would have missed so many wonderful experiences and meeting so many wonderful people.” Carol Doles is a consummate educator who always asks how she can help. She lets people in the NSDA community know that she is here to serve. According to Carol, “I cannot begin to put into words how valuable the NSDA has been and continues to be in my coping successfully with SD.” Carol is an enthusiastic, empathetic, and organized leader and the NSDA is grateful for all that she does.