

Helen Keller International Raises More than \$1 Million to Combat Blindness and Malnutrition around the World Spirit of Helen Keller Gala

Helen Keller International (HKI), a leading global nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting the causes and consequences of preventable blindness and malnutrition, celebrated a year of transformational work at the 2016 Spirit of Helen Keller Gala on Monday, May 2, 2016. The event raised more than \$1 million in support of its sight- and life-saving efforts in 21 African and Asian countries and the United States.

Some 250 supporters gathered at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York City to celebrate HKI's life-changing work across the globe and two prestigious partners in the organization's fight against preventable vision loss and malnutrition: Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon and philanthropist and Vice Chair of HKI's Board of Trustees Desmond FitzGerald. Matthew Whitaker, a 15-year-old jazz prodigy, provided a captivating musical addition to the evening with renditions of "Spain" and "Somewhere over the Rainbow".

"Helen Keller showed us that, if we can all work together and from the goodness of our hearts, the world can be an extraordinary place—one of hope, one of resilience, and one of transformation where everyone has the opportunity to live their lives to their fullest potential," President and CEO Kathy Spahn told attendees.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, accepted the ***Spirit of Helen Keller Award***, for his tireless focus on protecting the most vulnerable, empowering women and sustainably achieving development and change. The award was established in 1959, during Helen Keller's lifetime, to honor those whose work embraces the legacy of courage and promise of our founder. Past recipients include Bill and Melinda Gates and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

"Our achievements owe much to good partners like Helen Keller International," the Secretary-General said. "You are a partner in our efforts to address blindness ... and malnutrition. You join us in advocating for the empowerment of women and the human rights of people with disabilities. And your voices were part of the global discussions that produced the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—our new blueprint for ending extreme poverty and building peaceful, prosperous societies on a healthy planet."

Desmond FitzGerald, senior principal of Holyoke Partners and Vice Chair of the HKI Board of Trustees, was honored with the ***Helen Keller Humanitarian Award*** in recognition of his support for Helen Keller International's new Leverage Fund, a catalyst to unlock significant funds which will enable us to save the sight and lives of more people—and provide hope and opportunity for better life.

"I draw strength every day—and hope—from a profound epigram in the Babylonian Talmud, 'He who saves one life, saves the whole world.' FitzGerald said. "Many of the problems we face are simple—and have simple, yet transformative solutions. Vitamin A deficiency is a primary cause

of childhood blindness, stunting and death. Yet distributing high dosage Vitamin A supplements costs less than \$2 per year per child and saves their sight and their lives. This is an exceptionally cost-effective intervention.”

Ambassador David Donoghue, Jill Donoghue and Marcus Samuelsson were honorary chairs of the event. Henry and Karin Barkhorn, D. Brooks Betts and John and Nonie Sullivan served as gala co-chairs.

Helen Keller International was founded in November 1915 by a then 35-year-old Helen Keller, already a renowned advocate for those with disabilities, and George Kessler, a wealthy New York City wine merchant who survived the sinking of the Lusitania, to help soldiers blinded during World War I. Today, millions benefit from Helen Keller International's 120 programs in 21 African and Asian countries, as well as in the United States.

Guided by its mission to save and improve sight and lives for the world's vulnerable, HKI is committed to preventing blindness and vision loss for millions of people through cataract surgeries, vision correction, vitamin A supplementation, screening and treatment for diabetic retinopathy and treatment for neglected tropical diseases. As it has evolved to meet the health challenges of a changing world, HKI has also become a leader in reducing malnutrition by distributing vitamin A supplements, fortifying staple foods with essential nutrients, homestead food production and community-based management of acute malnutrition. And, tens of thousands of youth in the United States are helped annually through our ChildSight® program, which provides free vision screenings and prescription eyeglasses to students living in poverty in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Ohio and California.

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Founded in 1915, Helen Keller International saves and improves the sight and lives of the world's vulnerable by combatting the causes and consequences of blindness, poor health and malnutrition.