



Opus Prize Awarded to Organization Furthering Literacy in India

\$1 million humanitarian prize awarded at Marquette University

Nov. 7, 2005

Milwaukee, Wis. - The \$1 million Opus Prize, an international humanitarian award given to people or organizations that are committed to changing deeply rooted problems such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy or disease, was awarded last night at Marquette University to Reach Education Action Programme (REAP), in Mumbai, India, which seeks to empower the underprivileged through literacy for a new world of freedom, justice, dignity and self-respect.

The award was accepted by REAP founder Rev. Trevor Miranda, S.J. Marquette University was chosen by the Opus Prize Foundation, which funds the Opus Prize, to administer this year's award.

Under Father Miranda's leadership, in just six years REAP has opened more than 450 literacy centers to bring books and teachers to the desperately poor in India. Wherever the children may be - on the streets, in the hills, on the highways or in tribal areas - REAP's mission is to reach them, and to set them on a more hopeful path in the mainstream of society. REAP also launched an adult literacy program that focuses on giving women the education, training and skills they need to take on dignified jobs and escape from the streets.

Additionally, Father Miranda received an honorary degree from Marquette. The award recipients will participate in a week-long series of events on the Marquette campus dedicated to the cause of human rights around the world.

Other Awards

Two other endeavors were also recognized at the Nov. 7 award ceremony. Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos ("Our Little Brothers and Sisters"), a charitable organization serving orphaned and abandoned children in Latin America and the Caribbean, received a \$100,000 prize. The prize was accepted in honor of its founder, Rev. William Wasson, by Rev. Phil Cleary who runs the day-to-day operations of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos.

Dr. Juliana Akinyi Otieno also received \$100,000 for her service as a pediatrician in eastern Kenya, where two in every ten children still die before the age of five. Until recently, she was the only pediatrician serving a community of 300,000 people.

About the Opus Prize

The Opus Prize Foundation recognizes unsung heroes of any faith tradition, anywhere in the world, solving today's most persistent social problems by annually awarding the Opus Prize, a \$1 million award and two \$100,000 monetary awards. Opus Prize winners combine a driving entrepreneurial spirit with an abiding faith to give power to the disenfranchised, opportunities to the poorest, and inspire others to pursue lives of service. The Prize is awarded through partnerships with Catholic universities or colleges to maximize the scope and impact of its mission. The first Opus Prize was given in 2004. Today, 16 individuals from the United States and around the world have been recognized. The Opus Prize Foundation, established in 1994 by the founding chairman of Opus Corporation, is a private and independent foundation and does not accept unsolicited nominations. For more information, visit www.opusprize.org.

About the Prize Selection

The winners were selected by a jury appointed by Marquette University. The jurors were Chris Abele of the Argosy Foundation, R.W. Apple, Jr. of the New York Times, William Burleigh of E.W. Scripps Company, the Honorable Janine Geske of Marquette University, Erica John of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Supporting Fund, Kerry Kennedy of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, Sheldon Lubar of Lubar & Company, Roy Reiman of Reiman Publications, the Honorable Tommy Thompson, former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary and former Governor of Wisconsin, and Rev. Robert A. Wild, S.J. of Marquette University.

Marquette's participation in administering the Opus Prize has been a catalyst to exploring issues of human dignity and human rights and the response of individuals and institutions to such issues. As part of the year-long "Human

Dignity, Human Rights: A Call to Service," the university will present faculty lectures across academic disciplines, a film series, performing arts productions, and presentations by university guests on issues of human rights in the context of Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission.