



Social Entrepreneur Sarah Lance Wins 2016 Opus Prize for Kolkata's Sari Bari

Anti-trafficking creative enterprise wins USD \$1 million award honoring champions for faith-filled change

OMAHA, Neb. (Nov. 17, 2016)—Social entrepreneur Sarah Lance has been awarded the prestigious 2016 [Opus Prize](#) for her inspirational work as director of Sari Bari in Kolkata, India. [Sari Bari](#) is a nonprofit organization offering opportunity and hope to women who have been impacted by Kolkata's sex trade, or who are vulnerable to trafficking. The organization employs 120 women, giving them a safe, supportive environment where they are trained as artisans. The women transform used saris into beautiful handmade products—blankets, bags, purses, scarves, ties etc.—while creating new lives for themselves and promoting freedom for other women.

"The million-dollar Opus Prize award will allow Sari Bari to double the number of women working for the organization," Lance said, "as well as expand critical services for members of the Sari Bari family to heal, support and build with each other."

The two Opus Prize finalists, Rev. Peter Balleis, S.J., of Jesuit Worldwide Learning in Geneva, Switzerland and Sr. Anne Jordan, PBVM, of Cana Communities in Sydney, Australia, were awarded \$100,000 each. The prize was awarded during a ceremony and reception at the Holland Center, hosted by Creighton University and the Opus Prize.

The Opus Prize is one of the world's largest faith-based awards for social entrepreneurship. In the face of improbable odds, its laureates are creating change in their communities and demonstrating faith and creativity through their work. Their leadership and dedication is transforming the lives of people around the world.

Creighton University was selected by the Opus Prize Foundation to administer this year's award because of the university's commitment to international service and social justice. The 20-month process to identify, nominate and review candidates was made possible by the involvement of Creighton students, faculty, alumni and administration.

"In Kolkata, more than 11,000 women are employed in the commercial sex trade, and 40% of those women are under age 18," explained Joe Rauenhorst, chair of the Opus Prize Foundation board. "Sarah Lance and her team embody the values of the Opus Prize as they offer vulnerable women and girls a ray of hope and inspire others through their work."

"The entrepreneurial creativity of the Sari Bari business model is the critical element in providing women opportunities for freedom and success," Rauenhorst said. "Sari Bari's beautiful and market-driven product line fuels the company's growth and allows Sari Bari to provide competitive wages, healthcare benefits, a pension, education support and opportunities for advancement."

The two finalists were also honored for their faith and dedication to those in need. Rev. Peter Balleis, a Jesuit priest, has spent most of his professional career promoting education for refugees and displaced people. Jesuit Worldwide Learning has partnered with Jesuit Refugee Services to provide tertiary education to thousands of displaced people whose lives have been interrupted by natural disasters and conflict. The organization is in the process of expanding its programs internationally.

Sr. Anne Jordan, a Presentation Sister, serves as the spiritual director of Cana Communities. The Sydney-based nonprofit agency has developed a network of more than 700 volunteers who offer the city's homeless population a community of care. Recognizing the value and beauty of each person, Cana Communities serves those with the fewest options by providing an emergency shelter, meals, counseling and supportive relationships.

To arrange interviews with Sarah Lance or the two finalists, please contact the Opus Prize at info@opusprize.org



About the Opus Prize

The Opus Prize is an annual celebration of individuals working anywhere in the world, whose faith-filled, entrepreneurial leadership helps people in need transform their lives. The Prize is awarded to the recipients' organizations not only to expand their humanitarian efforts, but also to further inspire people to pursue service to others. Each year, the Prize partners with a Catholic university to identify worthy recipients, host the awards events, and involve committed students at every level of the process and celebration. More at: www.opusprize.org

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