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June 29, 2013

Sarah McLachlan Receives Distinguished 2013 World Service Medal from Kiwanis International

Vancouver, BC—Canadian singer and songwriter, Sarah McLachlan, has received the 2013 World Service Medal from Kiwanis International, the service organization's most distinguished award. McLachlan is being recognized for her dedication to music education.

"I am grateful and humbled to be the 2013 World Service Medal recipient," McLachlan said. "After a decade of hard work and the generosity of many sharing in my vision of providing music education to youth who otherwise have no access to music, the Sarah McLachlan School of Music became a reality. Thank you for this wonderful recognition."

McLachlan credits music as her solace when she was growing up. Music taught her that she was good enough, that she had something to offer. That feeling of pride and self-worth was paramount to her growing up. Music gave her the tools she needed to make it through the challenges she faced in life. The thought that there were children who might not experience the joy that music brings seemed unacceptable to her. She decided she could make a difference by bringing music into the lives of young people who might not have access to music education.

Sparked by the influence of music in her life, McLachlan dreamed of opening a music school for inner-city youth. Her dream first took shape with the creation of The Sarah McLachlan Foundation in 1999, and in 2002 she founded her non-profit organization, the Sarah McLachlan School of Music. Since then, more than 700 students have received instruction in piano, guitar, percussion, choir, voice, songwriting, student bands and sound lab. The Sarah McLachlan School of Music in Vancouver provides music education to underserved and at-risk youth at no cost. The school is dedicated to helping young people build community and find their voice.

“It’s an honor to present the World Service Medal to Sarah McLachlan,” said Kiwanis International President Tom DeJulio. “Her dedication to providing music education to children who otherwise would not receive it is impressive and aligned to the Kiwanis mission of improving their lives.”

As an organization dedicated to service, Kiwanis International promotes service not only among its members, but also among young people and the public at large. The Kiwanis International Board of Trustees established the Kiwanis World Service Medal in 1985 to recognize individuals who devote a significant part of their lives to meeting the needs of others.

The World Service Medal is presented annually at the Kiwanis International convention, held this year in Vancouver. McLachlan joins actors and humanitarians Mother Teresa , Sir Roger Moore, Audrey Hepburn and Jamie Lee Curtis; First Ladies Nancy Reagan and Rosalynn Carter; and organizations Heifer International and Sleeping Children Around the World as World Service Medal recipients.

One of McLachlan’s earliest introductions to Kiwanis came in 1987, when she took first place at the Nova Scotia Kiwanis Music Festival.

About Kiwanis

Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for students age 14–18, Builders Club for students age 11–14, Kiwanis Kids for students age 6–12 and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, dedicate annually more than 18 million service hours to strengthen communities and serve children. The Kiwanis International family comprises nearly 600,000 adult and youth members in 80 countries and geographic areas. For more information about Kiwanis International, please visit www.kiwanis.org.