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Post-Press Release
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Photos Available Upon Request

11TH ANNUAL EVENING UNDER THE STARS GALA PROVIDED A PERFECT
EVENING FOR CELEBRATING CHILDREN
Another Successful Gala for Special Needs Network

(Los Angeles) Sony Pictures Studios was the setting for Special Needs Network's (SNN) 11th Annual Evening Under The Stars Black & White Gala: Celebrating Innovators & Game Changers. Hollywood celebrities, politicians, dignitaries and members of the medical and business communities came together to raise money for children with autism and other developmental disabilities in underserved communities of Los Angeles. Honorary Event Chair Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas was on hand to speak while his Co-Honorary Event Chair, actress Holly Robinson-Peete wasn't able to attend due to travel restrictions in Florida.

Bold & The Beautiful actor, Sean Kanan served as the evening's Master of Ceremonies and SNN's President and founder, Areva Martin spoke about the history and continued mission of the organization. Martin presented the Innovators Award to Shannon Hunt, Senior Producer of Emmy Award winning daytime show, *The Doctors*. Los Angeles County Fire Chief and SSN board member, Daryl Osby presented Game Changer Awards to Alva Adams-Mason, Director of African American Strategies for Toyota and to Les Ybarra, Executive Director of Southern California Blue Cross/Medicaid for Anthem Blue Cross. SNN Board Vice President and Event Chair Bonnie Berry Lamon presented the Innovators Award to Dr. Henri Ford, Vice President and Surgeon in Chief at Children's Hospital Los Angeles who received an emotional standing ovation after the audience saw a taped TV segment of his amazing surgical separation of conjoined Haitian infants.

OWN's Karamo Brown served as the official Red Carpet Host alongside other press venues. Some of the carpet's special guests included actor Bret Green, actor Bruno Gunn, actress Camille Winbush, Ambassador David Huebner, Dr. Duane E. McWaine, actress Erica-Marie Sanchez, NFL player James Anderson, Dr. Jennifer Berman, TV personality Kathleen Bradley, actress Kathleen Gati, actress Kelsey Scott, LA City Attorney Mike Feuer, actor Oba Babatundé, TV personality Kiki Shepard, CBS anchorwoman Pat Harvey, actress Patrika Darbo, reality personality Robbie Montgomery, State Assembly Member Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, reality personality Tonya R. Banks, reality personality Wendell James and more.

A sumptuous buffet dinner was prepared by a team from Wolfgang Puck and art work created by children with autism and special needs was available for auction. Dancing With The Stars' Edyta Sliwinska choreographed two wonderful performances with children and counselors from the SNN Summer Camp and the Dance4U Dancers. Entertainment was provided by R&B songstress Crystal Starr & The Bowties who motivated the crowd to a packed dance floor for familiar tunes including a tribute to Prince. The evening carried on with desserts and plenty of additional music and dancing.

"The night exceeded all of my expectations and I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support. It was a night filled with inspiration and emotion. Our kids and families are blessed immeasurably and I can't thank our sponsors, donors and guests enough for making kids with autism a priority!"- Areva Martin

Proceeds from the Gala will sustain and expand Special Needs Network's health and human services programs which includes the development of a game-changing comprehensive autism clinic on the campus of Martin Luther King Hospital and Healthcare Center. The clinic will impact thousands of kids and their families and will be at the forefront of innovative healthcare models.

This year's major sponsors include Toyota, Walsh-Shea, Honorable Mark Ridley-Thomas, Honorable Curren Price Jr., AT&T, US Bank, UPS, Freeport-McMoRan and CBS2/KCAL9. The event was produced by Todd Hawkins of The Todd Group.

About the Special Needs Network: Special Needs Network's mission is to raise public awareness of developmental disabilities and to impact public policy, while providing education and resources to families, children and adults. SNN serves as a link between under-served communities and mainstream developmental disability organizations and governmental institutions, which often fail to address issues specific to these communities. SNN firmly believes that dignity, hope and opportunity are the birthright of all children.

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