

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Opportunity International Honors Supporters Working to End Global Poverty

*Chicago-based microfinance organization hosts annual National Summit*

**OAK BROOK, III. – OCTOBER 7, 2014** – Opportunity International is pleased to announce The MasterCard Foundation, Julie Hindmarsh, Katherine Haley, David and Donna Allman, and Warren and Mary Lynn Staley as the recipients of their annual leadership awards. The awards celebrate outstanding contribution and commitment to the global nonprofit, which provides loans, savings programs, business training and other resources to help millions across 22 developing countries break the cycle of poverty and transform their lives.

“We are honored and so thankful for the continued support and extraordinary efforts of each award winner,” said Vicki Escarra, Global CEO, Opportunity International. “They are champions in their communities and represent a wide range of philanthropists from foundations to corporations to youth and individual donors, who together make it possible for us to transform lives and strengthen families around the world.”

Opportunity International’s 2014 award recipients include:

**Strategic Partner Award: The MasterCard Foundation.** Given to an outstanding corporation or foundation partner that is aligned with the mission of Opportunity International. In March, The MasterCard Foundation, under the leadership of President and CEO Reeta Roy, announced their partnership in the \$22.7 Million Africa Growth and Innovations Initiative with Opportunity International to promote access to loans, savings programs and other critical financial products and services to help more than 7 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa work their way out of poverty through 2018. This partnership focuses on providing financial services to rural areas in Africa, including crop specific agricultural loans to smallholder farmers, savings programs and alternative delivery channels such as mobile banking. Other recipients of this award have included Caterpillar Foundation, Dorsey and Whitney LLP, and UPS Foundation.

**Women’s Leadership Award: Julie Hindmarsh.** Given to an individual, organization or company making a difference in supporting women leaders globally and changing the way the world thinks about issues facing impoverished women. Julie is one of the founding members of Opportunity International’s Women’s Opportunity Network, which has mobilized hundreds of women around America to support the organization. Julie helped create the “trust group” model of philanthropy, which revolves around weekly meetings where members pledge to guarantee each other’s loans and support their businesses. Trust group members also receive training to help them succeed in business and life and become leaders in their communities. Most recently, Julie established Millie’s Fund to support Opportunity’s EduFinance initiative, which has raised more than \$50,000 and enabled the organization to launch the EduFinance

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program in Tanzania. Past recipients of this award have included One Woman Initiative's Carly Fiorina and The MasterCard Foundation's Reeta Roy.

**Blue Haven Initiative Young Visionary Award: Katherine Haley.** This is a new award created together with Liesel Pritzker Simmons, founder of Young Ambassadors of Opportunity and co-founder and principal of Blue Haven Initiative, which honors an outstanding young leader with an entrepreneurial spirit that promotes advocacy, education and resource mobility. Katherine is an Opportunity International Governor and previously served as the co-chair of the Young Ambassadors for Opportunity chapter in Washington, D.C. For the past two years, she has been Opportunity's top fundraiser during the Live Below the Line challenge and traveled to Nicaragua on an Insight Trip in 2012. Katherine serves as the assistant to the speaker for policy in the U.S. House of Representatives where she is responsible for developing policy and coordinating strategies for education, workforce and social issues.

**Whittaker Award: David and Donna Allman.** Presented by Don Whittaker, son of founder Alfred Whittaker, to Opportunity International supporters whose giving and outstanding commitment to the mission have not only impacted the lives of those living in poverty around the globe but also inspired others to live purposefully and passionately. David and Donna Allman have generously supported Opportunity International for more than a decade, empowering people living in poverty to transform their lives, their children's futures and their communities. They are also closely involved in the Nicaragua Community Economic Development program and have inspired many Young Ambassadors for Opportunity to live purposefully and passionately.

**Weberg Award: Warren and Mary Lynn Staley.** Presented by Linda Lair, John and Jacque Weberg's daughter, and Gail Bradley, advisor to the Weberg Foundation and Opportunity International governor, to partners who embody the Opportunity International mission and who inspire others to support the organization. Warren and Mary Lynn have been supporters of Opportunity programs and have worked to promote Opportunity International for the past 12 years. Warren, former CEO of Cargill, is part of Opportunity International's Agriculture Campaign Taskforce and Mary Lynn serves on the Education Campaign Taskforce.

All awards were presented at Opportunity International's National Summit, October 2-4, at the Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel in Chicago. The summit brought together more than 400 philanthropists from around the world, including leaders of major philanthropic corporate and nonprofit foundations, individual donors, entrepreneurs and business executives. In addition to Opportunity International Global Chair Carly Fiorina and Global CEO Vicki Escarra, speakers included Howard Tullman, CEO, 1871; Rebecca Jarvis, ABC News chief business and economics correspondent and creator, host and managing editor of "RealBiz with Rebecca Jarvis;" Julia Stasch, interim president, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, among many others. Visit <http://opportunity.org/national-summit-2014> for more information.

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## **ABOUT OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL**

Opportunity International is a global non-profit organization that helps people in developing nations work their way out of poverty, strengthen their families and improve their communities. The organization currently provides loans, savings programs, insurance and other financial services and training to more than 5 million clients in 22 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Clients use the resources to expand businesses, provide for their families and create jobs in their communities. The U.S. headquarters of Opportunity International are in Oak Brook, Ill., with other key offices in Australia, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom. The organization proudly employs more than 17,500 people around the world. Discover more at [opportunity.org](http://opportunity.org).