



****For Immediate Release****

RENOWNED ATHLETES HONORED AS CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AT CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND 2019 ANNUAL BENEFIT

New York, June 7, 2019--The stars were shining on June 5, when legends in sports gathered with advocates for children's healthcare in Manhattan. [Children's Health Fund](#) (CHF), a non-profit committed to ensuring access to high-quality healthcare to America's most disadvantaged children, held its annual benefit at Capitale. The event raised nearly \$1 million to support these efforts across 26 programs in 16 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

Athletic all-stars **Allyson Felix**, **Katelyn Ohashi**, **John Starks**, and **Bernie Williams** were recognized as #ChampionsforChildren for sharing their hearts, voices and financial support to ensure children's well-being.

Allyson Felix:

"The work that Children's Health Fund does is amazing, so important and critical. There are so many people touched by that work. Just going through that experience myself and seeing what risk women and children are at when you do bring a child into the world, it makes me value the work that is being done here even more."

Katelyn Ohashi:

"[Talking about her visit to CHF's South Bronx programs] I studied healthcare last year and I always thought of it as people not having access to insurance, but the fact is that people that may be able to access insurance don't even have access to get to hospitals. The fact that [CHF] has cars driving people who are underprivileged to clinics is amazing."

Being a Champion for Children is so amazing because a lot of the work I do is not for the awards it's something that I'm extremely passionate about. I think every kid deserves to be a champion."

John Starks:

"It means a lot to have this honor by Children's Health Fund and be recognized for the work that I'm doing to give young people an opportunity to go to school... I'm excited to be here along with the honorees and know that we are making a difference in children's lives."

Bernie Williams:

"I was a young player with the Yankees back in 1992 and around 1996 Don Mattingly was retiring. He was looking for someone he could pass the baton to, and he chose me. There was an arrangement with the team where our home runs generated donations to Children's Health Fund. I did that for my whole career. It was just an incredible way to give back to the community while I was playing. It has been important for me ever since."

I feel that I've been given a lot in my life. I believe in giving our kids all the opportunities that they deserve and they are our biggest resource. If we don't take care of them, who is going to take care of them?"

Actress **Amirah Vann**, of the ABC show *How to Get Away with Murder*, shared her moving experience after visiting CHF's Los Angeles program, COACH for Kids, earlier in the year.

Amirah Vann

"I knew pretty early in my academic life that my high school medical science major needed to change. Healing people in the traditional sense would not be my path. The science had grown wings and flown completely over my head, but compassion remained. And whenever I see it, the young girl in me from Far Rockaway Queens raised in a single parent household with tear-filled nights from not having healthcare and feeling alone and unworthy, is filled with hope.

[Talking about her visit to CHF's Los Angeles program early year] This mobile medical clinic is one of many that have relationships with local schools. And I saw firsthand the genuine partnership between the mobile unit team and Principal Herández. Not only is the Children's Health Fund providing these young brilliant minds with free healthcare but they are also champions of education and literacy."

Also recognized for their tireless advocacy was **Paul Metselaar**, founder, chairman and CEO of Ovation Travel Group, who received the prestigious Founders Award; **Comic Relief USA** was given American Heroes for Children Award and **Kim Mukerjee, MD, MPH**, received the Irwin Redlener Award for embodying the spirit and mission of Children's Health Fund, working as medical director of the New Orleans Children's Health Project.

Dr. Kim Mukerjee:

"I have met countless families who, without our health services, would have no access to healthcare. These families, largely immigrants and refugees and, in many cases unaccompanied children, have profoundly complex needs, both medical and psychosocial. We strive to give these children a safe place to get all their needs met and help set them on a path to success."

Children's Health Fund Chief Executive Officer **Dennis Walto** says he was inspired to be among people with such strong passion and sense of purpose.

Dennis Walto

"As much as we deliver high-quality care to children all across the country, what's even more important is that we offer hope to children and their families. And our doctors, medical providers, and social workers are on the front lines of that effort. We don't give up and we won't give up.

To many people, a champion is a person who has defeated or surpassed all rivals in a competition, especially in sports. But a champion can also be a person who fights for a cause on behalf of someone else. I am honored and I am humbled to look at tonight's honorees and bask in the light of true champions."

Photo/Video Highlights from the Event:

- **Getty Images (please credit) :** <https://mm.gettyimages.com/v2/share/935ee5a0-28fb->

- [49f8-a7f6-f99b513765d9?page=1&order=desc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49f8-a7f6-f99b513765d9?page=1&order=desc)
- **B-Roll Video** featuring Allyson Felix, Katelyn Ohashi, Bernie Williams, John Starks, and Jane Pauley.
<https://youtu.be/sLyowPTHt5M>
- **Video of Dr. Kim Mukerjee and New Orleans Children's Health Project**
<https://youtu.be/7c0k5R38mJY>

For more information, visit www.childrenshealthfund.org. Follow CHF on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Children's Health Fund

Children's Health Fund (CHF) envisions a future where all children in the United States get the care and support they need to thrive. Because healthcare is a critical component of that vision and inequities in access exist, CHF's mission is to ensure access to high-quality healthcare for America's most disadvantaged children. CHF also works to reduce health barriers to learning, brings the voice of children to local and national policy debates, and in times of disaster, activates care for those in need.

Since 1987, CHF has been delivering high-quality, comprehensive healthcare to children in some of the most impoverished and underserved communities in the country. From South Los Angeles to the Mississippi Delta, from the South Bronx to southern Arizona, every year our 26 national programs and fleet of 50 mobile medical clinics provide care to more than one hundred thousand children and their families living in poverty. We deliver this care at more than 400 service sites, including fixed-site clinics, schools, Head Start centers, homeless and domestic violence shelters, and community agencies.

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