



February 1, 2016

Ms. Melek El Nimer
Unite Lebanon Youth Project
Beirut Building Company Bldg
Makdessi Street –Hamra
Beirut, Lebanon

Ms. El Nimer,

On behalf of the Arab American Institute Foundation, we are delighted to invite you to accept the 2016 **Kahlil Gibran “Spirit of Humanity” Award for Institutional Excellence** at our annual Gala on **Tuesday, April 19th** at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. We would be honored if your schedule will permit you to accept the award.

For eighteen years, the Gibran Awards program has celebrated individuals and organizations whose work reflects the ideals of the great Lebanese-American poet by promoting inclusion, cooperation and greater understanding among people with diverse backgrounds, both in the United States and throughout the world. Your work at the Unite Lebanon Youth Project are quite literally Gibran’s words put into action.

We are amazed at the accomplishments of the small team at Unite Lebanon Youth Project in five short, tumultuous years. While you reached thousands of vulnerable youth and opened doors to success and unity that were unimaginable before, Lebanon was coping with a flood of refugees from neighboring Syria that put pressure on government services and on the already fractious social fabric of Lebanon. Your achievements in the midst of such difficult times makes it all the more significant for the children you have helped believe in themselves and the students you have gotten into college with full scholarships. The work of Unite Lebanon Youth Project has created a space for the vulnerable youth of Lebanon – Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians – to believe success is possible even in the midst of physical, financial, and mental insecurity. Your leading a transformation towards unity and understanding between different nationalities that do not naturally interact and work together towards a brighter future. We would be honored to recognize your accomplishments in April.

Past recipients of the Award for Institutional Excellence have included St. Jude’s Research Hospital, Amnesty International USA, Children’s Defense Fund, Habitat for Humanity, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Vital Voices. A complete list of former honorees is enclosed for your review.

AAIF’s Gibran Gala is an annual black-tie event, the highlight of the Arab American social calendar. The gala brings together approximately 600 attendees, leaders from every industry, members of the House, Senate and Administration, journalists and academics, media celebrities and more. Proceeds

from this elegant and inspiring event support AAIF's research and outreach, leadership programs and scholarships, and the myriad projects that allow our organization to respond to issues, opportunities, and even crises as they arise. I have included background materials on the Gibran Awards and our organization to give you an idea of the stature of this event and the work of the Arab American Institute Foundation.

Your staff may contact Yasmin Hussein (202) 429-9210 or yhussein@aaiusa.org for additional information or to confirm your attendance at the Gala on April 19th.

On behalf of the Gibran Awards Committee and the Board of the Arab American Institute Foundation, we look forward to hearing from you and to the pleasure of honoring you in April.

Best personal regards,



James J. Zogby
President,
Arab American Institute



Maya Berry
Executive Director,
Arab American Institute

Enclosures



Kahlil Gibran “Spirit of Humanity” Awards Past Honorees (1999-2015)

Individual Achievement

Muhammad Ali
H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi
Hon. Richard M. Daley
Michael M. Kaiser
Casey Kasem
Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick
Hon. George Mitchell
H.M. Queen Noor al Hussein
H.E. Mary Robinson
Sting
Hon. Lech Walesa
John Sexton
Salma Hayek Pinault

Institutional Excellence

ALSAC - St Jude Children’s Research Hospital
Amnesty International USA
Arab Community Center for Economic & Social
Services
Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
Children’s Defense Fund & Marian Wright Edelman
The Corporation for National & Community Service
Focus: HOPE
Habitat for Humanity
Marshall Legacy Institute
National Center for
Neighborhood Enterprise
Reading is Fundamental
Reporters Without Borders
Rock the Vote
Search for Common Ground
Southern Poverty Law Center
Vital Voices
YWCA of the USA

International Commitment

Aga Khan Foundation
Juma Al Majid
American Near East Refugee Aid
Arab Thought Foundation
Global Impact
The Grameen Global Network
H.E. Federico Mayor (Director General, UNESCO)
Mercy Corps
Refugees International

International Commitment (continued)

RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights
Save the Children International Alliance
United Nations Relief & Works Agency
Women for Women International

Corporate Citizenship

Exxon Mobil
Fannie Mae
Ford Motor Company
Participant Media
Reebok International Ltd

Special Recognition

The Barenboim-Said Foundation
Hon. John D. Dingell
Martin Luther King III
MPI Media Group
MTV’s Fight for Your Rights Campaign
The Muslims are Coming! Comedy Tour
National Japanese American Memorial Foundation
Starz Encore Group and Brokaw, Inc.
Helen Thomas
U.S. Committee for Refugees & Immigrants
The Youth of the Arab Spring
Abdulrahman Zeitoun

Najeeb Halaby Award for Public Service

Hon. Spencer Abraham
Hon. Rosemary Barkett
Hon. Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Hon. Teresa Isaac
Hon. Theodore Kattouf
Hon. Ray LaHood
Hon. George J. Mitchell
Ralph Nader
Hon. Nick Joe Rahall II
Hon. John H. Sununu
Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni
Hon. Michael Baroody Sr.

Anthony Shadid Award for Excellence in Journalism

Christiane Amanpour
Lawrence Wright