

CARMELO ANTHONY AMONG BBBS OF NYC AWARD WINNERS AT 2015 'SIDEWALKS' GALA

Events — 22 April 2015



“**Sidewalks of New York**” is an annual awards dinner that honors some of our area’s most involved community members- donating their time to mentor the lives of underprivileged youths. The gala event, emanating from a chic ballroom inside of the lavish **Waldorf Astoria** hotel in midtown, serves as a yearly fundraiser to benefit **Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City**, an organization that pairs children from low-income households with adult mentors on a one-to-one basis. Each year, the group serves more than 4,000 children and young adults, equipping them with the focus and empowerment to reach their goals. Tuesday evening’s awards dinner and program would be the nonprofit organization’s most successful event yet- garnering upwards of \$2.6 million in proceeds for the event alone, upped by hundreds of thousands of dollars through their on-site ‘Text to Pledge’ campaign.



Following a brief cocktail reception, guests (including **NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell**) were ushered to their tables inside of the spectacular ballroom where the estimated 1,200 philanthropic folks would gather for a delicious three course meal and enjoy the evening's inspirational program.

Returning to emcee the 2015 "Sidewalks" presentation was former **CNN journalist and CEO of Starfish Media Group Soledad O'Brien**, who for the past few years has proven to be an excellent selection as the event's moderator and emcee. Beautiful and well-spoken, O'Brien's stage presence and command of the room- as usual- never wavered, from masterfully introducing each award recipient to using a nearby attendee's phone to explain exactly how guests were to text in each pledge.



As in previous years, the affair's most touching moments came from the banter between the 'Bigs' and 'Littles,' three teams of which would take to the podium to present the 2015 award winners. Following the inspired pair of remarks from **BBBS of NYC President Jonathan Bram and CEO Hector Batista**, awards were handed out to **Adebayo Ogunlesi, Chairman and Managing Partner of Global Infrastructure Partners (Corporate Award)**, **Agnes Hassell** for her years of work with both the United Nations and sitting on the board of numerous nonprofits(**Community Service Award**) and to **New York Knicks forward Carmelo Anthony (Sports Award)**. The acceptance speeches were both poignant and relatable, driving home the purpose that each of the three recipients worked their way up from relatively humble beginnings, each had been intensely dedicated to their craft, and each recognizing the importance of sharing some of their successes through community involvement. Anthony seemed especially humbled during his remarks, highlighting that although he's among the most famous basketball players on the planet, he's still 'just a man.'



Despite raising nearly \$3 million dollars in the course of one evening, there's still plenty of work to do for Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. The wildly successful gala was both motivational and thought provoking, leaving each of us with a pending urge to do more, to be more available and to sacrifice more of our time for other people. The programs and initiatives run by BBBS of NYC serve many more children than the three presenters that participated during the course of Tuesday evening's event, ones that need mentoring and developing. And you don't need to be a celebrity an athlete or a large corporate sponsor to make your mark on their young lives.

For more information on the group's mission, to make a donation or to get involved, check out bigsny.org.

- Jane Van Arsdale