

Right To Play's Heroes Gala raises \$2.64 million to help children around the world rise above adversity

NBA World Champion Pascal Siakam, Sun Life President & Chief Executive Officer Dean Connor, Gowling WLG's Ralph Lean and youth leaders honoured

October 18, 2019 – For a sixth consecutive year, last night Right To Play hosted its annual fundraising event, The Heroes Gala, which raised \$2,640,000 this year to help children rise above adversity through the power of play. This year, the Gala recognized exceptional leaders dedicated to supporting children's rights: Right To Play Ambassador and NBA champion Pascal Siakam, Sun Life President & Chief Executive Officer Dean Connor, and Gowling WLG's Ralph Lean.

"This year, we are proud to have honoured an amazing group of committed leaders from across Canada who are helping children rise above adversity," said Kevin Frey, Chief Executive Officer of Right To Play, "Every child should be protected, educated and empowered. The Heroes Gala raises the funds to make that a reality for the over two million children across 15 countries who learn vital life skills in Right To Play programs."

Recently named by Bizbash as the #1 Benefit in Toronto and #4 in Canada, the Heroes Gala hosted more than 1,100 guests, including the Honourable Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and numerous Canadian athletes and Olympians including Bianca Andreescu, Rosie MacLennan, Diana Matheson, Billy Bridges and Kylie Masse. Guests were treated to special performances by Cirque du Soleil and the Jim Cuddy Band

"I'm proud to be an Ambassador for Right To Play and so humbled to be receiving the Athlete Hero Award at this year's Heroes Gala," said Pascal Siakam. "Making a difference in the lives of children is so important to me, and I love that Right To Play works with children both here in Canada and around the world. I know first-hand the challenges kids face to achieve a better life and I'm honoured to be supporting Right To Play in the important work they are doing."

Sun Life also proudly announced a renewal of their partnership with Right To Play, pledging another \$600,000 commitment over the next three years. This brings the company's total commitment to Right To Play to \$1.5 million. Sun Life's support is in connection to the Health Pillar element of Right To Play's Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program. The Program aims to equip Indigenous children and youth across Canada with the knowledge, life-skills, and support resources needed to make healthy lifestyle choices and protect against diabetes and other chronic disease.

"I'm honoured to receive the Corporate Hero Award on behalf of Sun Life," said Dean Connor, President and CEO, Sun Life. "Helping people live healthier lives is critical to our company's purpose and built into our DNA. We're proud to play a role in Right To Play's PLAY program and to make difference in helping combat type 2 diabetes among Indigenous youth. After seeing the positive outcomes made through PLAY, Sun Life is excited to renew its commitment to the program and to continue building healthier and more sustainable communities across Canada."

For a third year in a row, the Heroes Gala also presented Youth Hero Awards to outstanding youth in Right To Play programs around the world who are rising above their challenges and becoming leaders in their own communities. This year's honourees included the participants of the Music For Development project in Lebanon, which is comprised of Syrian refugees and Lebanese youth; and Danny Charles, a youth Indigenous leader from Vancouver Island.

For more information, please follow [@RightToPlayCAN](https://www.instagram.com/RightToPlayCAN), and visit www.righttoplay.ca

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About Right To Play

A global organization committed to supporting children affected by conflict, disease and poverty as they work to rise up against adversity. Right To Play has pioneered a unique play-based approach to learning and development. Right To Play uses play in all of its forms – games, creative play, sport, free play – to engage children in programs that focus on making a positive impact in quality education, health and well-being, gender equality, child protection and building peaceful communities. Led by 70,000 trained local teachers and volunteer Coaches, Right To Play's cost-effective, sustainable, and life-changing programs reach 2.3 million children worldwide.

In Canada, programming includes Youth To Youth (Y2Y), a Toronto-based peer-to-peer youth leadership program, and the Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program, which partners with more than 85 Indigenous communities and urban organizations across Canada to co-develop play-based youth programs and focusses on improved health, education, resiliency, and employability.

About Sun Life

At Sun Life, we are committed to building sustainable, healthier communities for life and we're proud to hold the Caring Company designation from Imagine Canada. Community wellness is an important part of our sustainability commitment and we believe that by actively supporting the communities in which we live and work, we can help build a positive environment for our clients, employees, advisors and shareholders. Our philanthropic support focuses on two key areas: health, with an emphasis on diabetes awareness, prevention, care and research initiatives through our Team Up Against Diabetes™ platform; and arts and culture, through our award-winning Making the Arts More Accessible™ program. We also partner with sports properties, including NBA Champions, the Toronto Raptors, in key markets to further our commitment to healthy and active living. Read more about Sun Life in the community.

Media contact information:

Right To Play

Rebecca Cuthbert
Marketing and Communications Officer, Canada
rcuthbert@righttoplay.com
+1 (416) 203-0190 x 305

Sun Life

Yasna Criscione
Manager, Corporate Communications
yasna.criscione@sunlife.com
416-204-8110