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# **Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**

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>> ANNOUNCER: Hello and welcome to the 2023 Bazelon Center Awards!

Tonight we have American Sign Language interpreting and captioning on screens located throughout the venue. For those watching online, these services will be at the bottom of your screen. For audio description online, please click the link in the event description below.

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♪

>> ANNOUNCER: Hello and welcome. Our program will begin in five minutes.

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To kick off tonight’s festivities, please welcome Grammy‑nominated singer, songwriter, and guitarist Raul Midón.

♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

♪ Every day I wonder why ♪

♪ Peace on earth’s so hard to find ♪

♪ Real peace begins inside ♪

♪ In our hearts and in our minds ♪

♪ Hearts and minds begin to see

that one and all means you and me ♪

♪ And what we know can set us free ♪

♪ Rearrange reality ♪

♪ Reality is what we know ♪

♪ We can change a river’s flow ♪

♪ Plant a seed

watch it grow ♪

♪ Build a shelter

build a home ♪

♪ Home is where my heart will stay

even when I’m far away ♪

♪ Makes no difference

what they say ♪

♪ As long as you will be

my sunshine ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

♪ When I’m feeling sad and low

and I’m not sure where to go ♪

♪ And all the good times that I’ve

known ♪

♪ Have gone and left me all alone ♪

♪ All alone I’ll never be ♪

♪ Long as you are here with me ♪

♪ You’re in everything I see ♪

♪ And everything I’m doing ♪

♪ All I do

I do for you ♪

♪ You’re my sun

you’re my moon ♪

♪ Every lazy afternoon

you’re my inspiration ♪

♪ Inspiration lights the way ♪

♪ Brings a sparkle to each day ♪

♪ Makes the dark clouds go away ♪

♪ Let us let the children play ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

All right!

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

All right!

♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

All right!

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

Oh, yeah!

♪ Music is the reason why

people laugh people cry ♪

♪ Sing and dance and clap their

hands ♪

♪ It’s how the whole world

understands ♪

♪ Understands that we are one ♪

♪ Makes no difference

what you’ve done ♪

♪ Or where you live

under the sun ♪

♪ We are only human ♪

♪ Only human yes it’s true ♪

♪ Still the mystery is you ♪

♪ And the sky so clear and blue

makes every day feel so brand new ♪

♪ Brand new day throughout the world

for all the little boys and girls ♪

♪ If everybody lends a hand

we can live together! ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪♪

♪ Sunshine when you’re with me

I can fly ♪♪

>> ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the 2023 Bazelon Center Awards. Please welcome, Bazelon Center President and CEO, Holly O’Donnell!

>> HOLLY O'DONNELL: Hi, everyone!

Raul, wow! Thank you for starting our program and being our 2023 spotlight awardee. Good news... Raul is coming back!

Welcome, welcome to the Bazelon Center Awards. Tonight we are celebrating years.

It is wonderful to be with you in person and to all of you who are joining us virtually. I'm a white woman with brown hair and gold earrings.

Vice President Harris wanted to be with us tonight. We were in the "it's possible" category for months. As my teenage daughter would say... facts.

She sent this letter and I will share a few parts of it with you.

I am honored to send my warmest greetings to the members, leaders, and distinguished guests convened for the Bazelon Center’s 50th Anniversary.

Since taking office I have met with disability rights leaders from across the country, including the Bazelon Center's Jalyn Radziminski to discuss disparities and barriers that impact people with disabilities.

While we have made great progress over the past 50 years, it's clear that there is much more work to be done. Our administration has increased ‑‑ has invested over 45 billion to help children with disabilities succeed in the classroom.

Congratulations on this incredible milestone. May today's celebration motivate us to continue our efforts to build a stronger and more equitable future for our nation.

Kamala Harris.

[Applause]

And Kristen Welker is here with us tonight. So tell her that we're very grateful.

Our next awardee, Congresswoman Cori Bush is this year's congressional champion. Working alongside her and other advocates on public safety, legislation, the people's response act, she understands the intersectional concerns of racial equity and disability justice. She wanted to be here and we hope she will come next year.

So, 50 years. This is the golden anniversary, and a remarkable milestone for our small influential and far‑reaching organization.

People who launched and established what was then the mental health law project are here tonight.

[Applause]

Charlie, I'm going to just call out some names. I know it will get me in trouble. Charlie and Paul Friedman is watching online, Norman, Lynn Rubenstein, Elizabeth Jones, thank you so much for coming.

[Applause]

The acumen willingness to take risks and ability to find solutions through urgent, persistent and sometimes relentless legal advocacy in the fight for the rights and dignity of people with mental disabilities lives on in the DNA of the Bazelon Center today.

You will see it tonight. As Harvey Rosenthal, a long‑time peer leader and board member says, "The Bazelon Center has been ground zero for all these decades for promoting the rights of people with psychiatric disabilities."

Like Judge Bazelon from the bench, the Bazelon Center has had and will continue to have an outside impact on U.S. law and policy.

I want to thank our Board of Trustees, staff and interns, past and present ‑‑ many of you are here ‑‑ and, of course, a big thanks to all our supporters. You understand that systemic change requires financial investment, partnership, a lot of pro bono partnership, and a lot of patience.

A special thanks to some of our major supporters who joined us tonight. The Bazelon family who came down from Philly, Rita from JP Morgan Chase, and the McArthur foundation, our champion, Laurie, came all the way from Chicago. Many years ago I was a program officer at a foundation, and you get a lot of invitations to events. So we really appreciate you being here.

Making tonight's event possible is a record number of sponsors and a record number of new sponsors. Thank you very much!

When I look ahead to 2073, when the Bazelon Center will be turning 100, and I will be turning 99...

My hope is that the challenges of racism, ableism, gun violence, mass homelessness, mass incarceration, are part of a past chapter, because of the work that we are doing today and in the years ahead.

Now, enough from me, I'm Irish and I didn't even tell any stories, but you can find my brother Brendan, and he will tell you lots of stories.

It is my honor to introduce my long‑time friends and now my advocacy partners, Judy Woodruff and Al Hunt.

♪

>> JUDY WOODRUFF: Let's just give Holly O'Donnell a big hand!

[Applause]

Thank you, Holly. As she said, she's a dear friend of Al's and mine for many years. We are more than thrilled to be here tonight to be with all of you for the Bazelon Center's 50th year. The incredible contributions that it has made over all these years advocating for civil rights, for the inclusion, for the equality of adults and children with developmental and mental disabilities. I will tell you from a personal standpoint, speaking for Al and me, as the parents of an adult son who has spent the last 25 years since he experienced a brain injury, we have seen firsthand what it is like for individuals with these disabilities to go through an ordinary day, challenges that are just run‑of‑the‑mill for the rest of us become like Mt. Everest for an individual with disabilities. And we have seen him, we have seen what he has done, and we have met so many incredible members of this community of the disability community, physical disabilities, emotional, mental, intellectual, across the board, and we have been blown away by what they accomplished, and we have been blown away by the work of this center, which has been focused year after year after the original operation of Judge Bazelon to do the work that you have done. It's why this work ‑‑ it's a reminder of why this work matters so much year in and year out, you have advocated for those who cannot advocate for themselves. You provided legal support for those who have not had a voice of their own.

So, we congratulate you, Holly, we congratulate your team and the center, and we are so glad to know that there are members of the Bazelon family here. If you are here and you want to raise your hand, wave, stand up, let's celebrate you.

[Applause]

There you are. Thank you!

And we want to congratulate every single one of tonight's award winners. So thank you so much for letting Al and me come. Now a word from my husband.

[Applause]

>> AL HUNT: When Holly talked about the 100th anniversary in 2073, you think what will I ‑‑ I thought, no, I downtown want to go there, I'm going to stop. It really is an honor to be here tonight. I only met Judge Bazelon a few times, but one of our dearest friends, actually the man who married us was the judge who served on the court with Judge Bazelon and we heard many stories about what an inspiration in every way that he and his wife were, and this is such an appropriate tribute to him.

A word about your CEO. I have known Holly O'Donnell since she was... can I say in diapers? Because she really was back then. That's how long ago it was. And her mom and dad were two of the most special people I have ever known. Kathy O'Donnell could light up a room. She had that Southern charm and a way about her, and you were so happy to be with her. And her dad, who we lost when he was in his early 50s I think was one of the most important people in public life I've ever known. A key aide to Kevin White in Boston, and Tip O'Neill, who was the second greatest speaker of my lifetime, you all asked who was the greatest, we'll say that Kirk O'Donnell was his left and right arm at the end of the day, that's how good he was. After the speaker retired, Kurt then went and started a think tank, which a lot of policies and ideas that became the democratic platform for the next 20 years. So he's been gone 25 years, but we miss him. And, boy, did they have a fabulous daughter. Holly O'Donnell cares about people ‑‑ I mean, I was not the least bit surprised when she took this job, because this is what Holly was put on this earth for, to take care of people and help people. She has great compassion. She has great intelligence and she has great devotion.

And the only problem is I'm not even sure she's the most valuable member in her family. Because her brother Brendan has just as many great qualities. You know, if you remember when John Carrie was senator and you know something about John Carey, basically you go through Brendan. He was the go‑to guy. I just know, Kirk and Kathy up in heaven are looking down and saying, man, are my kids doing well, and we are so proud of them. And I just want to thank you all for letting us come tonight and congratulate your CEO on doing a fabulous job. Thank you!

[Applause]

>> ANNOUNCER: Please welcome Bazelon board chair, Eve Hill!

>> EVE HILL: Good evening! How do I follow that. Brendan is great, but Holly is really fantastic!

Thank you all for coming and joining us tonight. This is really important event for the Bazelon Center as it kicks off our next 50 years. And I chose to join the board of the Bazelon Center because it's the bravest and smartest legal organization in the disability rights movement.

And this...

[Applause]

Yes, it is.

And this event helps us meet our budget for the year. So your being here is important. And I hope you will consider using the QR code ‑‑ how high tech are we!?  ‑‑ to contribute even more than you have tonight. It really makes a difference. And I promise that we will make good use of it.

But I want to thank you especially our sponsors, a special shout‑out to our lead sponsors, Baker Hostetler, Reed Smith and Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation. We really appreciate it.

And I also want to take a moment to thank our wonderful Board of Directors. Please raise your hands if you are on the Board of Directors of the Bazelon Center. Stand and be proud.

[Applause]

It is a great pleasure to work with all of you to keep the Bazelon Center strong and smart and brave as we enter our second 50 years. And I want to thank also the wonderful staff who not only made this event possible, but who make the brave, smart work of the Bazelon Center possible every single day, rain or shine, bad courts, good courts... (chuckling)... everything. Thank you all. You have never met such a brilliant hard‑working group of people.

[Applause]

Now, I get to introduce Megan Schuller. She is our new Legal Director. And Megan comes to us from the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

[Applause]

We should applaud. Where I used to work, and I'm picking them off one at a time.

And she worked there on some of their most ambitious Olmstead and other litigation. And in her short time with us, she has already shown how awesome she is. Not that there was any doubt. She led us into a groundbreaking settlement with Yale over their treatment of students with mental health conditions, and that settlement is changing the lives of college students not just at Yale but across the country as other colleges look and see, oh, that's what we're supposed to be doing. Not punishing our students with mental health conditions but accommodating them and letting them come back and be valued members of our community.

[Applause]

And just in the last week or so she led us into a major new case, the Peace Corps, which refuses to accept individuals with mental health conditions into the service of the Peace Corps. This is unacceptable and we're going to challenge that under the law. Thank you, Megan, for bringing that up.

[Applause]

So we all know and we will hear more about the fact that Megan has some big shoes to fill. But it is quite clear already that she has the smarts, the courage, and the vision to take the Bazelon Center into the next 50 years in the future. So welcome, come to the stage, Megan!

♪

>> MEGAN SCHULLER: Thank you, Eve, for that very kind introduction. It's an honor to be here with you all in the showroom, and those watching our livestream tonight. I'm the Legal Director of the Bazelon Center, as you just heard. And I can't help but comment that I love that Ira was just making edits to his remarks still.

I'm a white woman with blond hair wearing a black and gold dress.

Now, my career has been dedicated to disability rights. Primarily through high impact litigation. As you heard, that was first at the Department of Justice and now at the Bazelon Center. Litigation, many of you know, has its limitations. But at its best, it is a very powerful tool for social change.

Olmstead v LC, Curtis, the Supreme Court case, is the case in point for the power of litigation to enact social change on a national scale and also why we are here tonight celebrating our 50th anniversary.

Now, I have had the pleasure over the past five months of spending many times arguing, I mean, debating with Ira over legal theories and strategies from AI to Olmstead, to immigration. Our recent team offsite was two days of debating the law. But we do. It's who we are.

But why?

It's because this work matters. We use litigation, policy, education and every tool in our arsenal to try to change the world in meaningful ways.

And let me assure you that fighting for a world where mental health is less stigmatized, where kids live with their families, where people have access to meaningful jobs, and people with mental health disabilities can live in their homes and communities with the supports and services they need so they can live as much like people without disabilities as possible. That is world‑changing work.

This work is also life‑changing and far too often life‑saving.

There are kids in D.C. that are being put into institutions unnecessarily when they could be served at home.

As you just heard, there are college and university students who are being intimidated, isolated, and excluded when they ask for help. The Peace Corps is telling people they cannot represent their country abroad because of fears and myths about their diagnosis and their needed mental health treatment.

And there are people with mental health disabilities disproportionally Black and brown people who are being killed by the police when all they needed was a mental health‑led and oriented response.

Others are cycling...

[Applause]

They're cycling through hospitals, jails and prisons when there are simple solutions. Provide the home and community‑based services that Olmstead promised. I am driven to continue this critically important work with all of you because of my own life experiences, because of the people with lived experience who have deeply impacted my life. And because of the people with mental health disabilities who have been silenced and erased.

Bazelon has been shaping the legal hand scape for 50 years, and we have more work to do.

Some is well known, such as protecting the current hard fought right all the way to the Supreme Court. And other challenges are unchartered in the shape of AI and its biased application. We here at the Bazelon Center are up to the challenge with your support and partnership. So I thank you all for being here tonight. And now I'm honored to get to talk about someone who I have gotten to partner with in this important work, Vesper Moore is a 2021 Bazelon awardee, one of our recent board members, and let me tell you is a force to be reckoned with in the mental health and disability rights movements.

Please welcome Vesper Moore.

♪

>> VESPER MOORE: I am a person with long curly black and brown hair. I'm a brown mixed‑race Indigenous person and wearing a light gray and blue suit. It's great to be here with you all. To be here at this celebration is to celebrate civil rights for people with mental disabilities and disabled folk at large, but it's also an opportunity to really think about how we can continue to fight for the consent and autonomy of people and their right to live in community, fulfilling the promise of Olmstead. And expanding the use of Olmstead. And I think a big part of that is really when we look at the peer support movement and we look at the disability rights movement, a continued work of having those who are most impacted really taking the lead in policy creation, from the very inception of those moments.

Today I am going to welcome someone who has been a force fighting for disability rights and in our movement in the legal space. And someone who has done so much for the Bazelon Center over these years.

Ira Burnim has been, for us, someone who has been unwavering in a stance of fighting for our right to live in community, desegregated, and want to say that when I first met Ira, and through my conversations with Ira, I have just learned so much. I have been very inspired by these ideas of how can we, as folks in the disability rights movement, continue to be seen, continue to be heard, and Ira Burnim has really been part of that. . So I want to welcome Ira Burnim to the stage.

♪

>> ANNOUNCER: Please welcome Court Monitor for the United States v. New York and O'Toole v. Hochul, Clarence Sundram.

>> CLARENCE SUNDRAM: As you can see, I'm not Ira Burnim. I'm a brown man with dark hair, what is left of it, wearing glasses. I'm dressed in a blue suit with a blue shirt and a red tie.

Everyone who works in the field of mental health law knows the significance of the Wyatt case in Alabama which emerged in the 1950s. This federal court decision established the constitutional right to people confined in state institutions and established and led to the development of law not only in the United States but influenced the development of mental health law across the world.

For the first 15 years after this court order, its most significant effect was in the rebuilding of institutions and the improvement of conditions within them.

Then along came Ira Burnim and the Bazelon Center. Who saw the opportunity to transform the implementation to focus upon supporting people in the community rather than confining them in institutions.

In 1985, long before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the Supreme Court decision in Olmstead, Ira managed to negotiate a new set of court orders animating the long dormant language supporting people's rights to live in the least restrictive environment.

His work drew a massive expansion of community services in the state of Alabama that continues to this day. It is this type of imagination and vision coupled with the brilliant legal mind that is the hallmark of Ira's legal career, and he has left an indelible mark that has made not only on the law but in the lives of people every day who have been affected by these lawsuits.

Ira is not only a great lawyer, but he is also a skillful strategist and tactician, who knows how to maneuver the chess pieces on the board for maximum advantage for his clients.

I'm very glad not to have been his adversary in the course of my legal career. And I'm very proud and honored to be able to call him my friend and to recognize his contributions this evening.

Thank you.

[Applause]

>> ANNOUNCER: Please welcome AbilityOne Commission vice chair, Chai Feldblum.

>> CHAI FELDBLUM: Ira Burnim is an icon and a treasure. Need I say more? Okay, I'll say two minutes more. It's fair to say that Ira played the leading role ‑‑ and I mean THE leading role ‑‑ in ensuring that the integration promise of the ADA has become the reality of it is today.

The first effort was the Supreme Court's Olmstead case itself, but when he work with plaintiff's counsel and recruited to be the advocacy on the Supreme Court and of course when he with the amazing Jennifer Mathis, conceptualized and coordinated the amicus brief in that case, which let me tell you, is not an easy effort.

But then Ira displayed ‑‑ you displayed, Ira, your true genius, in helping to shape a thoughtful and strategic approach to implementing the Olmstead case.

Ira brainstormed the initial convenings between litigator organizations to set out a strategic plan for what cases to bring, what cases not to bring ‑‑ those were fun conversations ‑‑ and when to bring different cases.

Ira became THE national resource on Olmstead. He was on top of everything going around the country helping to shape and support a thoughtful and strategic approach.

And then, of course, Ira ‑‑ many of the "always careful and strategic cases brought by the Bazelon Center to advance Olmstead.

Ira brought brains, energy, passion, humor when necessary, including some, you know, comments here and there. Brought all of that to this strategic effort.

Ira, you are an icon and a treasure. On behalf of everyone here, on behalf of someone with a hidden mental health disability, and on behalf of everyone who has been lucky to call you a friend and a colleague, I say "thank you." Thank you for what you have done.

[Applause]

>> ANNOUNCER: Sam Bagenstos.

♪

>> SAM BAGENSTOS: So, you have heard a lot about Ira Burnim. I am so honored to be here to have the chance to say some words about him. I am Sam Bagenstos, I am a blond haired very pasty faced white guy wearing an off‑the‑rack gray suit and striped shirt and blue tie. And I want to tell you a little bit about why Ira is, for me, a model. He is a model of commitment to serving rights and equality and justice. He's a model of legal innovation and opportunism. He's a model of strategic thinking. I didn't say he is a model of diplomacy...

[ Laughter ]

... or tact. In fact, I recall the first time that I met Ira, I was 25 years old. I was working at the Department of Justice on a very star‑crossed case that was a case that had been litigated for many years before I walked into the Department of Justice, and I... we had just lost when I walked in, after a massive trial, and I was the lawyer assigned to handle the appeal. And the disability rights community thought it was just a terrible idea for us to appeal. And Ira, along with a number of other people came in, but Ira is the one who really made an impression. It was an intervention basically saying, what in the hell are you guys doing appealing this case? This is not the way we litigate. And it was the first of many times I saw Ira engage in those kinds of conversations. The cases not to bring, as said, is so important. And I admit I was a little bit intimidated and a little bit thrown off at the time, and it wasn't my decision, and we did appeal, and we did lose the case, just as he said. And for the next quarter century I have had the privilege of having conversations with Ira and with other counsel, where Ira has become such a trusted colleague, adviser, counselor, and friend.

There is no one ‑‑ there are a lot of people in this room who have had a lot to do with making Olmstead real. There is no one who has had more to do with making Olmstead real than Ira Burnim. Ira, when I had the opportunity to lead disability rights enforcement in the Obama administration Justice Department, Ira saw an opportunity to infuse everything he had been doing at the Bazelon Center into all of our work, to use the leverage that we could bring as the government to bring these legal theories that he had been developing basically in the legal wilderness for ten years after Olmstead and bring them to the masses, and we did that every settlement, every piece of litigation, every piece of work we did on Olmstead during the Obama administration finds its origin in the strategic work that Ira and all of you did for many years. But Ira very crucially leading, pushing on me, calling me almost daily at times saying, you know, you should do this you shouldn't do this. I can think there was a case that was decided very recently by a court when I read the decision, I said, you know, I remember what Ira said we should have done in this case, and it would have been better if that had happened. Ira's fingerprints are everywhere. You just have to know where to look. So I will admit, I'm still a little bit thrown by that first conversation I had with Ira 25 years ago when ‑‑ more than 25 years ago, when I was a very young lawyer, but Ira was crucial to my learning about how to be an effective disability rights and civil rights lawyer. He has trained so many people to be effective disability rights and civil rights lawyers. He is my model, my ideal of a person who serves justice in the public interest as a lawyer. And I want to thank you, Ira, so much for everything that you have done for people with disabilities for civil rights and for me personally. Thank you so much, Ira.

[Applause]

>> ANNOUNCER: Please welcome Bazelon Center Senior Counsel, Ira Burnim.

♪

>> IRA BURNIM: Thank you, everyone. Thank you for being here. It is true I am not the most tactful of people. But I'll try to be this evening. I'm a white male with black and gray hair wearing a tie and a Blazer and dress pants. And thank you for Vesper and all for your very kind remarks. And also thank you to the Bazelon Center. It has been and is a great place to work. A place where, as we say, you can help or work on changing the world. And that's been extremely satisfying. And at times challenging. What attracted me to the Bazelon Center was, as Megan mentioned, its strategic thinking, the high quality legal work it did, and also this attention it paid to kind of imagining, picturing a different world, and then figuring out how we might use legal advocacy to get there.

I have learned so much while working at the center from talented colleagues, the center's wise friends and advisers, and the dedicated experts with whom we worked.

Advocacy is a team sport, and I have many mentors and collaborators to thank. Many more than I mentioned tonight. High and Clarence were early coaches, using the sporting analogy, Elizabeth Jones, others coached as well. Teammates, you get the analogy, to whom I owe great debts, including, of course, Sam, Michael, Stephen, Jennifer Mathis, Allison Barkov, Lewis Bossing and many co‑counsel and co‑conspirators. They're all MVPs.

I'm thankful for the support of Bazelon's executive directors and the board. The Bazelon Center's accomplishments are not possible without them. Not only do they raise the money, but they also skillfully motivate and attempt to manage the outspoken and headstrong staff.

The center has a new Legal Director, an excellent choice, as you have seen this evening. I plan to stick around to help in the months and maybe years ahead. Currently the center is collaborating with and pushing the Biden administration to strengthen disability rights, reduce all of the police in responding to mental health crises, and ex and community‑based services. The center is litigating cutting‑edge cases in the federal courts and with the broader civil rights community navigating challenges in the federal courts.

A lot remains to be done. I am optimistic that with your support, the Bazelon Center will continue to help our nation become a more inclusive and more just one. It's been an honor to work at the Bazelon Center and to continue to work. Tonight is... anyway, I'm very moved by this evening and people's remarks, and I greatly appreciate that. And I want to thank you all for contributing to the Bazelon Center's important work and mission. Thank you.

[Applause]

♪

>> HOLLY O'DONNELL: Thanks, Ira, and thanks to all of you. I've got a gift for Ira. I don't know if he's going to know what it is, but I hope you figure it out. Now I am really excited to give Raul his award for being our spotlight champion this year, and you can learn more about Raul at Raul Midón.com. He has other concerts coming up. And he is going to close us out. So thank you so much for being here. Please stay and connect with folks. We've got tons of food, and we will see you next year too.

[Applause]

>> RAUL MIDÓN: Thank you so much. I'm a white man... oh, wait...

That's not right!

(chuckling)

I'm a brown skinned man with a black and gray jacket. And black glasses. And a black hat. And a black T‑shirt with Braille on it, by the way, which says "Just Be You."

[Applause]

And I'm blessed and honored to be receiving this spotlight award. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Bazelon Center and acknowledge the great work that you do.

This next song is dedicated to Christian Aleman, a young and successful advocate who is loved and will be missed. Ladies and gentlemen, this is called "Next Generation."

[Applause]

♪

♪ Walking down the street

telling everyone I meet ♪

♪ About this feeling that is

growing ♪

♪ Me and all my friends

and they are telling

their friends too ♪

♪ About these changes that they are

knowing ♪

♪ Infinity takes no time at all

these days ♪

♪ So much more than just a passing

phase ♪

♪ And have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You've got all the information

so there's nothing in your way ♪

♪ Have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You are the leaders of tomorrow

and tomorrow's here today ♪

♪ See the world by touch and what

you see can mean so much ♪

♪ That all your words still hold a

meaning ♪

♪ It's better day by day ♪

♪ Life can give and take away ♪

♪ As long as love is where you're

leaning ♪

♪ Infinity takes no time at all

these days ♪

♪ So much more than just a passing

phase ♪

♪ And have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You've got all the information so

there's nothing in your way ♪

♪ Have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You are the leaders of tomorrow

and tomorrow's here today ♪

♪ Oh, tomorrow's here today ♪

♪

♪ Maybe it's all the same ♪

♪ Just a different phase with a

different name ♪

♪ Kids play like they really know

the game ♪

Oh, yeah!

♪ Worthless money ♪

♪ Everyone's your friend ♪

♪ And to morality that you can't

bend ♪

♪ It's true though, friends 'cause

everything's for sale ♪

♪ But have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You've got all the information so

there's nothing in your way ♪

♪ Have you heard about the next

generation? ♪

♪ You are the leaders of tomorrow

and tomorrow's here today ♪

♪ and tomorrow's here today ♪

[ Cheering ]

>> RAUL MIDÓN: Thank you!

>> ANNOUNCER: Thank you for joining us for the 2023 Bazelon Center Awards.

Please continue to enjoy tonight's event. Silent auction bids will conclude at 8:30.

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