



## **Valerie Browning crowned winner of THE ONE, an International Humanitarian Award founded by Rotary International District 3450**

(Hong Kong, 12 June 2012) In a night filled with touching stories, entertainment and charity at its best, THE ONE winner - **Valerie Browning** from Ethiopia, was announced on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the award's inaugural Gala Dinner held at Holiday Golden Mile. Over 360 of Hong Kong's socialites, celebrities, decision makers and entrepreneurs came to honour the five finalists selected for the award.

Setting the scene for an unforgettable evening the five finalists were flown in from all corners of the globe including **Valerie Browning from Ethiopia; Father Joe Maier from Thailand; Dr. Daniel Murphy from East Timor; Ma Cecilia Flores-Oebanda from the Philippines; and Shruti A Shroff from India.**

Local celebrities and MC's for the evening **Philip Chan** and **Maria Chen** introduced THE ONE - an award founded to honour the world's unsung heroes with the prize money of USD \$100,000 to further their cause.

In a heartfelt speech, Founder of THE ONE **David Harilela** told guests of his inspiration for the award and his vision to "honour [the heroes] and arm them for their upward battle to right all the wrongs of mankind". David proudly exclaimed to a mesmerized crowd, "Does the Mother Teresa of tomorrow exist? I think we have proven that tonight with a resounding YES".

The crowd was also entertained by the angelic voices of **Howard McCrary** and **Tricia Buser** who inspired all with their renditions of Michael Jackson's 'Heal the World' and Mariah Carey's 'Hero'. The five finalists were graciously asked to come onstage and received a thundering standing ovation for their unfaltering passion to change the lives of those less fortunate.

Finally the highly anticipated moment came where Founder David Harilela and Award Sponsor Richard Elman excitingly unveiled the winner's name. THE ONE

Ambassador and local celebrity **Donny Yen** and Baccarat representative **Mr. Francois Mainetti, General Manager of Baccarat Greater China** were also invited onto stage to present Valerie Browning with THE ONE Trophy.

“This award is not mine, it is for the Afar people. Sometimes it feels like the world wants to wipe them off the face of the earth, but this will make sure the Afar people remain a part of this world. Thank you” said Valerie Browning.

Donations continued throughout the evening with several generous individuals making personal donations to each of the finalists.

Hong Kong heartthrob **Michael Wong** then performed his well-known version of “I feel good” to kick off the after party.

Funds for THE ONE were raised throughout the night via donations and through raffle sales. Raffle sponsors included: IWC, The Upper House, Loewe, Louis Vuitton, Ermenegildo Zegna and The Four Seasons Hong Kong,

Guests spotted during the evening include: the sponsor of the evening **Dr. The Hon. Hari Harilela** and his niece **Nisha Parmanand, Dr. Aron & Laura Harilela, Avisha Harilela, Elsie Leung, Cissy Wang, Mary Cheung, Nasser & Harina Khan, Sally & Matthew Chan, Mr. & Mrs Brandon Chau, Cecilia & Louis Tan, Winnie & Renny Yip, Mahnaz & David Lee, Anita & Balu Chainrai, Pauline & Albert Wong, Tricia & Roland Buser, Tania Mohan, Purviz Shroff, Kwok Kau Au, Yvonne Kung, Lilly Cheung, Kwok Ka Au** and many more.

### **About THE ONE**

Conceptualised and founded by District Governor (2011-2012) David Harilela, THE ONE is dedicated to finding the hero of all heroes. Inspired by the Rotary motto of “Service Above Self,” THE ONE is an individual who dedicates his or her daily life to serving others, and helping those in need to alleviate pain, suffering, poverty and hunger. Now in its inaugural year, it is hoped that THE ONE will create a legacy that will continue for many generations to come.

The winner of the award will receive US\$100,000 to further their respective humanitarian cause and service projects, while the remaining 4 finalists will be awarded with US\$5,000 each. The award of US\$100,000 has been generously endowed by respected Hong Kong businessman and Chairman and Founder of Noble Group, Richard Samuel Elman. The winner will also receive THE ONE Trophy created especially by David Harilela and sponsored and brought to life by the artistry of Baccarat.

For more information please visit THE ONE website at [www.theonerotary3450.org](http://www.theonerotary3450.org).

### **About Rotary International & District 3450**

Rotary is a volunteer organisation of 1.2 million business and professional leaders united worldwide to provide humanitarian service and help build goodwill and peace. Over 34,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries conduct projects to address today's challenges – including illiteracy, disease, hunger, poverty, lack of clean water and environmental concerns – while encouraging high ethical standards in all vocations.

As the world's largest private provider of international scholarships, The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International helps about 1,000 students annually to study abroad and serve as cultural ambassadors. Rotary also partners with seven prestigious universities around the world, providing opportunities to earn a master's degree in peace and conflict resolution.

PolioPlus is Rotary's flagship programme. By the time polio is eradicated, Rotary club members will have contributed US\$1.2 billion and countless volunteer hours to immunize more than two billion children in 122 countries. Rotary is a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, along with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rotary International District 3450, with over 80 years of history, now comprises of 66 clubs in Hong Kong, Macao and Mongolia. Hong Kong consists of 52 clubs (including 1 E-Club), 6 in Macau and 8 in Mongolia.

**Detailed biographies of David Harilela, Richard Samuel Elman, the finalists and judging panel are also available on request.**

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