

World Harmony Run 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony –Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, NY

- Torch-Bearer Award
- Presentation by. Irish World Harmony Run Coordinator – Mangala Keenan,.
- Acceptance by Paula Savage , President of the International Peace Garden Foundation

Salil Wilson , Executive Director, World Harmony Run

I am delighted to invite our Irish World Harmony Run Coordinator – Mangala Keenan, who spends many, many hours organising our relays in Ireland. Please give a warm welcome to Mangala. Thank you.

Mangala Keenan: A few weeks ago the World Harmony Run was passing through Ireland, and one of the ceremonies which we were delighted to participate in was a ceremony at the Peace Garden in the city centre of Dublin. We discovered that it was not just a Peace Garden; it was an International Peace Garden. And the headquarters of the organization was actually in New York State. Today I am delighted to introduce Ms. Paula Savage, the Director of the International Peace Garden Foundation, a non-profit organization established to advance global friendship and international understanding through the creation of peace gardens and cultural programmes all around the world.

For over twenty years, Paula Savage and her team of volunteers have facilitated the creation of twenty-two gardens in, at this stage, every corner of the globe. An inspirational plaque is erected in each garden with the message, “Let the seeds of peace begin here and spread throughout the world.” And this message is so similar to the one of the World Harmony Run. In addition, Paula organises programmes that help many students all around in the world in the countries where the gardens are created, with scholarships and educational programmes. She also helped initiate a Beads of Peace programme, to help to train women in Africa to operate a small business.

The Torch-Bearer Award is presented to individuals who inspire communities through their own lives and deeds, and Paula is a shining example of that, so I would like to invite Paula here.

Mangala garlands Paula Savage with the Torch-Bearer Award

Paula Savage, President of the International Peace Garden Foundation: Thank you so much for your kind words. Dear friends and honoured guests, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, I am truly honoured and humbled to be standing here before you today as the recipient of the coveted Torch-Bearer Award. A heartfelt thank you to all of you.

Over twenty years ago, when the first International Peace Garden was presented by Canada to the United States, we never imagined that this journey would take us across five continents and introduce us to so many wonderful people. It has been a journey of inspiration and opportunities – opportunities to deliver a global message of world peace and friendship, much like that of the World Harmony Run. Our mission is much similar to that of the World Harmony Run. We strive to foster global friendship and to make our world a kinder, gentler place. We do this through the creation of Peace Gardens honouring peacekeeping activities and efforts commemorating peaceful alliances. We have a dedicated volunteer base. These are average people who feel passionate about our mission. They are the backbone of this organization. We have no endowments, and all of our work is accomplished through the generosity of concerned citizens.

Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

We invite you to visit our website, read about our history and share our story with your family and friends. If we are able to inspire just one deed toward mankind, we will have accomplished our goal.

In closing, a sincere thank you to our good friends from the Dublin chapter of World Harmony Run. You have opened our eyes to a new friendship and close collaboration. Together, we can change the world.

Salil Wilson: I did actually visit Paula’s website, and it turns out she lives less than half a mile from where our running route goes. And she has invited us to come to her house. I don’t know if she knows what that means! [*Laughter*] Thank you so much for coming.