

Toyota Awards \$150,000 in Grants to Mothers of Invention at Newsweek & The Daily Beast's Third Annual Women in the World Summit in New York

March 10, 2012

TORRANCE, Calif. (March 10, 2012) – Toyota has issued three \$50,000 grants to women selected as the “Mothers of Invention” at the annual Women in the World summit to reward them for their use of innovation and courage in tackling some of the most pressing problems facing women. Grants were given to Aseneth Andrews, founder of The Catherine Ferguson Academy for Young Women; Talia Leman, founder of Randomkid.org; and Jessica O. Matthews and Julia Silverman, inventors of the sOcket and co-founders of Uncharted Play.

The summit, hosted by Tina Brown, editor in chief of Newsweek & The Daily Beast and co-sponsored by Toyota, was held at the David H. Koch Theater at New York’s Lincoln Center, and featured three days of programming and panels aimed at addressing issues facing girls and women worldwide. Summit participants included Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Angelina Jolie, Meryl Streep, Christiane Amanpour, Diane von Furstenberg, Barbara Walters, Christine Lagarde, Lauren Bush Lauren, Chelsea Clinton and Tina Brown.

“All of these women have made incredible impacts in their communities and the world using innovation and dedication to support causes that are close to their hearts,” said Latondra Newton, Vice President, Toyota Motor North America, Inc. “The change these women have made in thousands of lives simply through their tenacity and belief in change is remarkable. Toyota has always been committed to initiatives that touch communities around the world. This event allows us to show our support in a tangible way to help these women continue the work they’re doing.”

The grants given to the Mothers of Invention by Toyota aim to bring awareness to the women’s innovative programs, as well as help further their objectives and future projects by providing additional funding.

About the Mothers of Invention:

Aseneth Andrews, Principal

Founder, The Catherine Ferguson Academy for Young Women

Andrews founded the school for young mothers more than 20 years ago as a revolutionary experiment in helping young women with children complete their secondary education and ultimately break the cycle of poverty that often besets one generation to the next. The unique school hosts on-site daycare facilities and features a working urban farm, with curricula connected to the farm as are nutrition and business classes since the school sells its produce at the local farmers market. The Catherine Ferguson Academy boasts an impressive rate of 90% graduates, particularly impressive considering Principal Andrews does not allow students to graduate without first securing a place in college.

Talia Leman

Founder, RandomKid.org

At ten years old, Leman saw Hurricane Katrina devastate New Orleans and was moved to organize other kids in her hometown of Waukeet, Iowa to start a Halloween trick-or-treat collection of coins for victims in the Gulf Coast. The idea quickly caught on across the country and resulted in millions of dollars raised. Leman, now 17

years old, went on to found RandomKid.org, a Web site where teenage social entrepreneurs connect with one another to “develop, manage and accomplish” their goals of helping others. Using the site to raise money and organize efforts, 12 million children in 20 countries have taken on projects that range from building schools in Cambodia to constructing wells in Kenya. Collectively having raised close to 11 million dollars through the site, Leman saw that for every dollar invested in a youth project there is a 200 to 1000 percent return on that investment. Her most recent project is The Big Return, a program that has business leaders underwrite youth-led projects in U.S. communities.

Jessica O. Matthews and Julie Silverman

Inventors of The sOccket, co-founders of Uncharted Play

Invented by Matthews and Silverman, the sOccket harnesses the kinetic energy of the soccer ball during normal game play and stores it for later power needs. After play, small electronic appliances, like an LED lamp, can be plugged into the sOccket. At Uncharted Play, the goal is to convince the masses to “rethink FUNction” by creating solutions to global problems that optimize the functionality of play and inject more joy into each day. For the sOccket, the flagship movement of Uncharted Play, this meant taking a sport loved around the world and harnessing this passion to provide real, environmentally-friendly energy to power electrical appliances like LED lamps, water sterilization devices and mini refrigerators.