

PRESS RELEASE



New York's Oldest Preschool - Little Missionary's Day Nursery Hosts Annual Sara Curry Awards

House of Cards Actor Michael Kelly to host evening honoring outstanding achievements with the Sara Curry Humanitarian Award

NEW YORK, NY, May 9, 2014 – Little Missionary's Day Nursery, the oldest continually operating non-sectarian school in New York City, hosts the annual Sara Curry Awards on Saturday, May 10 from 6:15 to 10 p.m. at the Manny Cantor Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side at 197 East Broadway.

The evening, hosted by "House of Cards" actor Michael Kelly with comedy by renowned Broadway and Hollywood personality Jim Gaffigan, and music by Marc McDonald, will honor outstanding members of the community who dedicate their time and energy to helping others.

This year's honorees of the Sara Curry Humanitarian Award include:

- **Jennifer Clement:** Her novel *Prayers for the Stolen* (Hogarth) underscores the role of literature to address important social issues and addresses one of the most urgent problems of our times: the trafficking of girls and young women. As stated in *The New York Times Book Review*, "Prayers for the Stolen gives us words for what we haven't had words for before, like something translated from a dream in a secret language. The novel is an ebullient yet deeply stirring paean to its female characters' resiliency and capacity for loyalty, friendship, compassion and love, but also to the power of fiction and poetry."
- **Thea Taube:** As the children's librarian at the Ottendorfer branch in the East Village, she was recognized as a resourceful children's librarian who, after she was hired in 2004, rescued an American Girl doll named Kirsten Larson from a storage shelf and began lending it to girls, which inspired an outpouring of support for her efforts. Thea continues to read, sing to, and inspire children of the East Village to find meaningful connections with wonderful books.
- A **mystery award** will go to one worthy nursery school parent, to be announced at the event

This evening promises fine food and fare, including an open bar, music, comedy, and silent auction. Silent auction prizes include: A vacation in St Barts, weekend in the Hamptons, designer handbags, dinner at exclusive restaurants, children's classes, designer haircuts, spas, fine wines, and much more! Past honorees include Gloria Steinem, Senator Tom Duane, Lily Tomlin, Dan Zanes and Natasha Weiss.

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"We're so pleased to hold our annual Sara Curry Awards this Saturday to honor those who have gone above and beyond to make the world a better place for the youngest members of our society," said Little Missionary's Day Nursery Director Eileen Johnson. "Named after the founder of our school, who took children in from the street and kept them safe during the day more than one hundred years ago, we honor the legacy of Sara Curry on May 10 and celebrate our continued work to watch over and empower little New Yorkers at New York's oldest non-sectarian preschool."

"Lil Mish is a place my wife Karyn and I hold very dear in our hearts," said *House of Cards* actor and Sara Curry Awards MC Michael Kelly. "Our daughter Franke was nurtured and encouraged by Eileen and the loving staff there to be the very free spirit she is today. We couldn't be more excited to have our son Clinton starting there in the Fall."

Funds from the evening will go to support the school's expansion plans, which include doubling its current capacity to 100 students as well as restoring the historic landmark building at 93 St. Mark's Place in New York's East Village to its original full use. The growth would preserve an important piece of New York history and the bustling and enriching preschool experience that dates back more than one hundred years. More about Little Missionary's expansion plans and to donate, visit lmdn.org/helpusgrow.

"Sara Curry was one of New York City's great heroines and it is an honor to be given a prize in her name," said Sara Curry Award honoree and author Jennifer Clement.

Native New Yorker and orphan Sara dubbed "the little missionary," set up a nursery in her apartment on Avenue C where she fed and nurtured children in 1896. In 1901, a generous patron donated the building at 93 St. Marks Place, the current location of Little Missionary Day Nursery. The school has safe-guarded thousands of children of working families over the past hundred years. Since 2001, Little Missionary's has been on a path of consistent growth, and plans to restore its institution to full capacity. On October 5, 2013, St. Marks Place between Avenue A and First Avenue was co-named Sara Curry Way in honor of the school's founder.

Currently, Little Missionary's Day Nursery provides an education for 50 preschoolers aged two to four with a focus on developing a child's emotional intelligence. The approach the school takes is the ART: Accept, Reflect, Teach. Classroom philosophy is focused on nurturing and emotionally aware programs that includes art, music and dance enrichment.

Additional information about the awards and to reserve tickets: lmdn.org/saracurryawards.

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About Little Missionary's Day Nursery

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Little Missionary's Day Nursery is the oldest continually operating non-sectarian school in New York City. The school serves 50 working families and children ages two through four with daily, after school and summer programs. Most importantly, Little Missionary's provides emotional education so that children can learn to manage their feelings and become responsible and generous community members. The school's nurturing and emotionally aware program includes art, music and dance enrichment, and we distribute tens of thousands of dollars a year in tuition assistance. lmdn.org

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