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November 30, 2021

Higher Committee for Human Fraternity
Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

Dear Members of the Judging Committee:

I write to wholeheartedly endorse Maggie Gobran, better known to the world as “Mama Maggie” or the “Mother Teresa of Egypt,” for the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity.

In founding and leading the humanitarian organization, *Stephen’s Children “Loving the Unloved,”* Mama Maggie offers an extraordinary example of the widespread common good one person can spark and accomplish when selflessly dedicated to feeding, forming, educating and caring for the poorest of the poor—the children of Cairo who frequent the city’s garbage dump.

What began as her own occasional visits, born of profound pity and charity to give Cairo’s most destitute children a little comfort, has blossomed into a remarkable, reliable charity that ministers to as many as 32,000 families per year through 2,000 trained and compassionate staff.

Her organization’s extraordinary humanitarian impact in her local community has won Mama Maggie global accolades and has stood as an innovative model for others around the world who seek to foster solidarity, fraternity and collaboration in environments that are frequently fraught with sectarianism and extremism.

Impact on the local community, serving as a role model and inspiring others to become role models

When Mama Maggie founded *Stephen’s Children “Loving the Unloved”* to minister to Cairo’s outcast children, she knew that it was not enough to simply address their immediate basic needs. A former corporate management consultant and university professor, she saw a more comprehensive need. She saw that, while children from all backgrounds must have food and shelter simply to survive, they also need love, guidance and mentoring to be able to grow into self-sustaining adults and to live productive lives.

Tragically, too many of the world’s children come from communities that are broken and unable—or unwilling—to provide many of the skills necessary to help children grow and succeed in life. Today, Mama Maggie and her charitable network offer direct care and love to children and guide them and their families through education and formation, giving them the tools—and the opportunity—they need to rise above the cycle of poverty.

Co-Chairman of the following: Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease • Bi-Partisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism • Lyme Disease Caucus
Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus • Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs
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Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases Caucus • Hong Kong Caucus • Congressional Pediatric and Adult Hydrocephalus Caucus

The heart of *Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved"* outreach is its home visit program. Through these weekly encounters, trained and caring workers provide emotional, humanitarian and psychological care, family counselling, spiritual mentoring, economic assistance, health and hygiene awareness as well as assistance in the growth and development of the children.

Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved" also offers these children the chance to participate in camps to cultivate leadership and other key life skills. Some examples of these camps are Homes for the Homeless providing nutrition, education, clothing, entertainment, and medical care for girls and boys.

Additionally, Mama Maggie organizes volunteer doctors and dentists from around the world to provide check-ups and encouragement for good health habits for children who attend *Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved"* sports camps and schools—all free of charge. Frequently, it is the first time a child has ever seen a doctor despite their great needs.

In 2015 Mama Maggie began the twelve-week Leadership Training School where volunteers are trained to evaluate children and their needs. These "trainees" join and assist Mama Maggie's professional staff ministering to the children and families of the Cairo's garbage dump. She currently trains 150 leaders per year who make their communities better places.

Contributions to the promotion of global fraternity, solidarity of the human family, justice and world peace

The impact of Mama Maggie's simple outreach to the poor and neglected children of Cairo's garbage dump has reverberated around the globe. Universities the world over frequently invite her to speak. Her message resonates and inspires people to do more for others.

Many of the students who hear Mama Maggie's message go on to volunteer for *Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved"* in Cairo. Post-graduation, many go into professions and lives of service to the poor elsewhere in the world after their time in Cairo's garbage dump with Mama Maggie. Many adults and professionals—especially doctors and dentists—have become very involved in other similar humanitarian outreach efforts in Africa and South America once they have visited and learned from Mama Maggie in Egypt.

Mama Maggie stands as a most powerful witness to global fraternity, solidarity of the human family, justice and world peace. One of her many noteworthy examples came following the 2015 ISIS slaughter of twenty one Christians on a beach in Libya, which ISIS broadcast to the horror of all the world. Twenty of the twenty-one individuals were graduates of Mama Maggie's outreach in Cairo. Heartbroken, Mama Maggie has honored their memory with the message of love, peace and fraternity to counter the increasing global violence and hate.

Mama Maggie often visits the families of the martyred, and together, they continue to call for forgiveness, tolerance, peaceful dialogue in their home villages and schools. President El- Sisi invited the martyrs' families to the grand opening of the church built to honor the martyrs and acknowledge their sacrifice.

Innovation to find new ways to foster fraternity and collaboration

Augmenting traditional humanitarian assistance—food, shelter and medical care—with family counseling, education, time management training, vocational training, and character formation is the innovative philosophy that is key to the success of *Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved"*. Dedicated to the whole person, Mama Maggie and team are continually offering and reinforcing synergistic assistance and guidance so that the children have a greater chance at sustained success.

Along with innovative programs, the *Stephen's Children "Loving the Unloved"* organization's most effective means of helping others is through their powerful personal examples of love and action for every child encountered, regardless of their status or background. This ethos generates from the heart of Mama Maggie. Her relentless zeal to care for such children inspires others to work with her organization—or replicate her approach elsewhere. She has created a movement of dedicated people who want to be instruments of peace and fraternity throughout the world.

Recognition from notable figures and/or international organizations and institutions and/or community members

Several notable figures have recognized Mama Maggie for her extraordinary contributions to global fraternity.

In 2019, she became the first Egyptian to receive the International Woman of Courage Award from then-Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and then-First Lady Melania Trump. In 2017 Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, presented Mama Maggie with the Arab Hope Maker Award.

Mama Maggie has also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize more than once. Most recently, in 2020, Garnett Genuis, a Member of the Canadian Parliament, offered the nomination noting her service for "the poor and disadvantaged," which he said she does "regardless of faith or ethnicity."

For these reasons and more, I earnestly recommend that you recognize Mama Maggie's singular contributions by bestowing her with Zayed Award for Human Fraternity.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress