

espnW and Toyota Recognize 5th Class of 'Everyday Heroes' at 2017 The espnW: Women + Sports Summit

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NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., October 4, 2017 — Last night at the eighth annual espnW: Women + Sports Summit presented by Toyota, espnW and Toyota announced the fifth class of Toyota “Everyday Heroes,” an award that celebrates individuals making a difference for women and girls in their local communities through sports. Grants in the amount of \$10,000 are provided to the organizations honored.

“For five years running, Toyota is proud to celebrate the ‘Everyday Heroes’ and honor these remarkable women who are inspiring change in the world around them,” said Nancy Inouye, national media manager, Toyota Motor North America. “Through their dedication and commitment, we see the positive lasting impact they have made to empower women and girls through sports.”

The 2017 Toyota “Everyday Heroes” are:

Darlene Hunter (Founder, [Lady Mavericks Wheelchair Basketball](#) – Dallas, TX)

Darlene Hunter, a Paralympic gold medalist, oversees the Lady Wheelchair Mavericks Basketball team, which is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of physically disabled women and girls. Founded in 1990, the team has for the last four years hosted overnight camps for young disabled girls from across the country.

Fartun Osman (Founder, [Somali Girls Rock](#) – St. Paul, MN)

Somali Girls Rock officially started in 2004 and focuses on providing girls from Minnesota’s Somali community – which numbers about 250,000 – opportunities to play soccer, basketball and track & field in an environment where they can feel comfortable. Some SGR graduates have gone on to play sports in college, while others have become doctors, lawyers and community leaders.

Mira Manickam (Founder, [Brown Girl Surf](#) – Oakland, CA)

Formally launched in 2014, Brown Girl Surf was created because outside activities and spaces – specifically surf culture – have not been inclusive to women of color. Brown Girl Surf works to build a more diverse, environmentally reverent and joyful women’s surf culture by increasing access to surfing, cultivating community, amplifying the voices of women of color surfers and taking care of the earth.

“We’re honored to spotlight the tremendous work done by these women in their communities,” said Laura Gentile, senior vice president, espnW & Women’s Initiatives. “It takes real conviction and dedication to accomplish what that they have accomplished and drive positive change in the lives of young girls.”

To qualify for a Toyota Everyday Heroes grant, a person and/or organization must:

- Have been operating as an active, sports-related organization for at least three years;
- Are currently creating sports opportunities for girls and women in their local communities, and making a meaningful, inspiring impact with quantifiable results;

Last year’s honorees were Courtney Payne Taylor (Founder, [Girls Riders Organization](#)), Tracy Pointer (Founder, [GROW/GROW Girl](#)) and Beth Devine (Founder, [Philly Girls in Motion](#)). **In 2016**, the honorees were Chrissy Lewis-Summers, founder of Beyond Sticks, and Heidi Boynton, founder of Mini Mermaid Running Club. **In 2015**, espnW and Toyota honored Chrissy Lewis-Summers, founder of Beyond Sticks, and Heidi Boynton, founder of Mini Mermaid Running Club. The **2014 honorees** were Dr. Kimberley S. Clay, Monica Gonzalez and Claire Smallwood. **In 2013, espnW and Toyota recognized** Barb Lazarus, Justine Siegal and Mobolaji Akidoe as the inaugural recipients.