

# *Looking Beyond...*

*A non-profit organization dedicated to creating awareness and advancement for children with disabilities.*

*January 2009  
Staying in Touch...*

*To all the children we try to reach:*



*“You are valuable because you exist.  
Not because of what you do or what you have done,  
But simply because you are.”  
- Max Lucado*



*Looking Beyond... proudly presents  
The Soaring Spirit Award 2009 to  
**Rudy Garcia-Tolson***



*A Day of Inspiration  
Save the Date for Our Luncheon  
Wednesday March 11, 2009*

# Looking Beyond...

2009 Recipient of the Soaring Spirit Award  
March 11, 2009



## Rudy Garcia-Tolson

Having no legs is really a gift," says Rudy Garcia-Tolson. "If I wasn't an amputee, I probably wouldn't have the same drive to do what I do."

What Rudy does is spend six or seven hours a day in athletic training, routinely break world records in swimming, compete in triathlons, and tour the country as a motivational speaker to spread his message that "A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon." He's also racked up a number of accolades including the Arete Courage in Sports Award, the Casey Martin Award from Nike, and the Spirit of Da Vinci Award. He's been picked to carry an Olympic torch and named one of People Magazine's 20 teens who will change the world. Oh, and he's buddies with movie star Robin Williams and has appeared on Oprah!

All of that would be a staggering achievement for any young man, but Rudy was born with multiple birth defects: a club foot, webbed fingers on both hands, and a cleft lip and palate. At age five, having already undergone 15 surgeries, he had to choose between life in a wheelchair and walking with artificial limbs. He opted for greater mobility and a full, active life with prosthetics, which necessitated the surgical amputation of both his legs through the knee. Undaunted, he began swimming, then running, and has been winning ever since. By age 15, he had amassed 1 gold medal from the Paralympics games for swimming and many more awards for swimming, running and community service.

At 19, Rudy's still going strong. In December 2007, he broke his own 200 meter individual medley world record twice—in the prelims and finals—at the U.S. Paralympics Open Swimming Championships. Most recently, he received a gold & bronze medal & set two world records in swimming at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and Paralympics Trials.

While others might be impressed by Rudy because he's overcome apparent disadvantages, "I don't ever really think about the fact that I'm an amputee," he says. "I don't want to be known as the guy with no legs who inspired everyone; I would just like to be known as a great athlete and someone who is very passionate about what they do."



"A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon"

## *A Glimpse into Last Year*



Our gratitude to Dick and Rick Hoyt.

Last year's Looking Beyond recipients of the Soaring Spirit Award were Dick and Rick Hoyt, better known as "Team Hoyt". The father and son team together competes in marathons and triathlons. The determination it takes to participate in more than 216 triathlons, to run over 65 marathons, 81 half marathons and numerous road races at lesser distances is unbelievable. They are an inspiration to us all and their presence in our 2008 Gala was a moving experience for all who attended.



### **Our heartfelt gratitude to all who have generously supported us.**

*A few of the 2008 Silent Auction Contributors:*

Buccellati  
Leviev  
Frank Muller  
Panerai  
Bulgari  
Four Seasons Hotel NY  
Chloe  
Prada  
Tiffany & Co.

Robert Cavalli  
Carolina Herrera  
Peninsula Hotel  
Van Cleef & Arpel  
Video Audio Center  
Sergio Rossi  
Gucci  
SBE Entertainment and Hotel  
Oscar de la Renta

## *Landmark Achievements*

Due to your overwhelming support and generosity in the past 10 years, Looking Beyond has helped fund many children's programs. We have been able to impact the lives of many children with special needs. Our contributions have benefitted the following organizations.

Camp Pavika  
Blue Sky Meadow  
No Limit Theatre Group  
Ability First  
SCORE  
Children's Hospital  
Camp Ronald McDonald  
Vista Del Mar  
The Friendship Circle  
Exceptional Children Foundation  
Kids Courage Foundation  
SERT  
Special Olympics/Challenged Athletes  
Shriners Hospital

UCLA Early Intervention Program  
Ahead with Horses  
4 Therapy West Group  
Richland Avenue School  
Etta Israel  
Achievable Foundation  
Jump Shot  
F.A.C.T.  
Children of MOVE  
Doheny Eye Institute  
Starbright Foundation  
Kayne Eres  
Friends of Rosewood School  
Project Miami to Cure Paralysis



## *Our Mission*

Looking Beyond is dedicated to promoting awareness and creating advancement and enrichment for children with disabilities by supporting different programs and services.

We wish to impact the lives of as many children as possible, hoping to make a change in the community at large.

### **Let's Keep the Dream Alive... Together**

Fundraising is only one aspect of Looking Beyond. Some of our goals are:

- Promote Awareness
- Create Opportunities
- Inspire
- Look Beyond preconceived barriers and limitations for people with special needs and ourselves.

## *A Day of Inspiration with*

**Rudy Garcia-Tolson**

Save the Date for Our Luncheon

Wednesday March 11, 2009

Silent Auction 10:00 A.M.

Luncheon and Program Noon to 2:00 PM.

The SLS Hotel

The most important thing we want you to remember is that **every dollar** of your donation **goes directly to help children** with special needs. With your support and generosity, we aim to **help many different organizations** that can help fulfill the dreams and visions of **children to reach their full potential** regardless of their disabilities.