

Remarks by President Obama at Points of Light Award Ceremony, White House, July 15, 2013

Well, good afternoon, everybody. And on behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. Twenty-three years ago, President George H.W. Bush began a tradition. He knew that across the country every day, Americans were finding ways to serve others, often with very few resources and very little recognition. And President Bush knew that their good works were valuable to the people they helped -- but beyond that, he knew that their spirit of service was vital to our national character. So he created an award, the Point of Light Award, to recognize Americans who serve their neighbors and communities in innovative ways that inspire us all.

So, we are extraordinarily honored to be joined by the family that helped build the Points of Light Foundation into the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. President Bush, Mrs. Bush we welcome you.

Today we've come together to mark another milestone. About 10 years ago, **Floyd Hammer** and **Kathy Hamilton** were getting ready to retire. They had been farming for years. They had earned a break. They planned to sail around the world. And then their friend told them about a special place that they should visit along the way: In a village in Tanzania, a volunteer mission was helping to rebuild an HIV-AIDS clinic. When they arrived in Tanzania, the country was in the third year of a brutal drought. People were starving and dying. Many of them were children. And having seen this, Kathy and Floyd simply had to do something about it. And so their plans for a leisurely retirement were replaced by a new mission: fighting global hunger. Today, the nonprofit organization they created, **Outreach**, has distributed free meals to hungry children here in the United States and in more than 15 countries worldwide -- to date, more than 233 million meals. And this work, they say, is the most rewarding thing they've ever done. And I have to say, having just been to Tanzania with Michelle, we can attest to how important this kind of work is, how it changes lives.

And so if the purpose of this award is to celebrate Americans who work to make our country and our world a better place -- not for their own advantage, but just to serve, pure and simple -- I can't think of anyone more deserving than Kathy Hamilton and Floyd Hammer.