

Christian Leader Robert Stearns Receives America-Israel Friendship Award

On Thursday evening in Miami, Fla., the Bnai Zion Foundation presented Dr. Robert Stearns with the America-Israel Friendship Award at its annual southeast gala. As founder and executive director of Eagles' Wings, Stearns has been a strong advocate and ally of Israel for more than two decades through initiatives such as the Israel Experience College Scholarship program and the internationally celebrated Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem (DPPJ).

With more than 175 nations participating on the first Sunday of every October, the DPPJ is one of the largest Israel-focused prayer events in history.

"I am deeply honored to be receiving the America-Israel Friendship Award," Stearns says. "Now more than ever, it is critical for Christians to stand in support of Israel. As the only democratic nation in a sea of oppressive governments, Israel is a beacon of liberty and bastion of justice in an increasingly dark world."

Established in 1908, the Bnai Zion Foundation is dedicated to helping those in need through humanitarian work in America and Israel. With a focus on maintaining the connection between America and Israel, the organization has launched several campaigns to improve the lives of people in Israel and worldwide. Some of their initiatives include the Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa, Israel, and the Ahava Village for Children and Youth, a residential facility for children from at-risk home situations.

Each year, recipients of the award are honored for their continuous friendship with the state of Israel and their

efforts to cultivate a strong relationship between Americans and Israelis. Past recipients of this distinguished award include United States President Gerald Ford, Sen. Charles Schumer, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Elie Wiesel, Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Proceeds from this year's gala will help fund a new, protected underground emergency department at the Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa. This medical center offers compassionate care to all people without regard to religion, ethnicity or economic status.