

# Soccer Stars Come Out on Giving Tuesday at Grassroot Soccer World AIDS Day Gala

*Tobin Heath, Carli Lloyd, Ali Krieger & Christen Press highlight evening raising over \$2 million for Grassroot Soccer and honoring U.S. Women's National Team*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, December 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On December 3 – Giving Tuesday – celebrities and high-profile individuals from the worlds of sport, entertainment, and global health came together at Hall des Lumières in New York City to support Grassroot Soccer's 2024 World AIDS Day Gala.

The event raised over \$2 million for the renowned global adolescent health organization, which uses the power of soccer to equip young people with the life-saving information, services, and mentorship they need to live healthier lives.

Grassroot Soccer honored the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team with its Game Changer Award for their trailblazing leadership and powerful advocacy for gender equity, which continues to change the landscape of sports and uplift the rights of girls and women everywhere. Accepting the Award on stage on behalf of the team were 2x World Cup winners Tobin Heath, Carli Lloyd, Ali Krieger, and Christen Press.

"I have experienced the work of Grassroot Soccer up close on the ground, and I've seen what is possible when young women and girls, and young men and boys, are healthy in mind, body, and spirit," said Press, who is a Global Ambassador and Board Member for the organization, in a speech opening the night. "When you are mentally and physically healthy – you can achieve great things, from the simple to the extraordinary."

The evening was emceed by gala host Roger Bennett, founder of the Men In Blazers Media Network. Other notable figures in attendance included Kola Bokinni (actor from the Emmy and SAG Award-winning Apple TV+ series Ted Lasso), Tim Howard (former goalkeeper for U.S. Men's National Team and Manchester United), Don Garber (Major League Soccer Commissioner),



Carli Lloyd, Ali Krieger, Christen Press, and Tobin Heath attend the 2024 Grassroot Soccer World AIDS Day Gala



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*Christen Press, Grassroot Soccer Global Ambassador and Board Member*

Jessica Berman (National Women’s Soccer League Commissioner), Kyle Martino (former U.S. Men’s National Team player), JT Batson (CEO/Secretary General, US Soccer), Jenn Mackesy (co-owner of Gotham FC), Ethan Zohn (winner of CBS’s Survivor: Africa and Grassroot Soccer Co-Founder), and Lance Armstrong.

Bokinni and Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos presented the Game Changer Award to the USWNT. Following their award acceptance, Heath, Lloyd, Krieger, and Press sat down with Grassroot Soccer Global Board Members Dr. Akudo Anyanwu and Dawn Averitt for a fireside chat about their

achievements on and off the pitch, including their fight for pay equity.

The program also featured video messages of support from David Beckham, Seth Meyers, Naomi Girma, Julie Foudy, and Christian Pulisic, and concluded with a live auction featuring a Manchester United matchday experience with Sir Alex Ferguson and a week’s holiday at the Xarraca Estate in Northern Ibiza. The menu was curated by chef Marcus Samuelsson.

Dr. Tommy Clark and three fellow footballers founded Grassroot Soccer in 2002 after witnessing the devastating effects of HIV while playing professional soccer in Zimbabwe. After watching friends die of AIDS, the four teammates recognized that soccer — a positive force in the community — could be used to engage adolescents to stop the spread of HIV.

Over its 22-year history, Grassroot Soccer has evolved from a disease focus to an adolescent health focus, empowering more than 25 million young people to make educated choices about their most pressing and interconnected health challenges, including HIV/AIDS, mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence.

The evening also celebrated the public launch of Grassroot Soccer’s Play It Forward campaign – an ambitious and transformative campaign to raise \$35 million over 5 years to catalyze growth and help the organization scale its impact to reaching tens of millions of adolescents each year with life-saving programs.

The evening was supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), Getty Images, Merck, Gilead, Diageo, and more.

#### About Grassroot Soccer

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is an adolescent health organization that leverages the power of soccer to equip young people with the life-saving information, services, and mentorship they need to live healthier lives. For more information, visit [www.grassrootsoccer.org](http://www.grassrootsoccer.org).

For more information about Grassroot Soccer contact:  
Ethan McCoy, Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications

Ethan McCoy  
Grassroot Soccer  
emccoy@grassrootsoccer.org

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