

United Planet Celebrates Founder Dave Santulli and Announces New Scholarship at 24th Anniversary Celebration

United Planet celebrates its 24th anniversary, honoring founder Dave Santulli, announcing his President Emeritus title and a new scholarship in his name.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [United Planet](#) celebrated a milestone moment this week with a special tribute dinner in Boston honoring founder Dave Santulli and commemorating the organization's 24th anniversary. Attendees joined from across the United States and

around the world, both in person and via Zoom, to recognize Dave's enduring impact and the global community he helped build. For nearly a quarter century, United Planet has been guided by a vision rooted in connection, service, and genuine human relationships. The celebration marked both a reflection on the organization's history and a renewed commitment to the work ahead.

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*Tim Castano, Chairman of the
United Planet Board*

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HONORING DAVE SANTULLI: FOUNDER, VISIONARY, AND NEWLY APPOINTED PRESIDENT EMERITUS

During the evening, United Planet's Board of Directors formally bestowed Dave Santulli with the title of President Emeritus, recognizing his lifelong dedication, his deep humility, and the example he has set for the entire United Planet community. One board member described him as someone who built something extraordinary and did so

Tim Castano, Chairman of the Board, spoke about Dave's influence on United Planet and the people who have served the mission over the years. He shared, "Dave achieved something remarkable. Not only did he devote himself to building an organization with global reach and deep purpose, he did it in a way that reflects the very best of what leadership can be. His kindness, his humility, and his generosity of spirit are what people remember most. All of us who have worked with him have learned from his example. His legacy radiates through the entire organization and always will, and we are committed to ensuring that the spirit he instilled here continues to grow long into the future."

Former staff member and long-time colleague Theresa Higgs reflected on the early days of United Planet, saying, "Dave believed the world needed more bridges, not walls. His ability to rally people behind a mission was infectious, and his vision turned into real impact across communities worldwide."

Ambassador John Simon, who has worked closely with United Planet for many years, emphasized the importance of [relational diplomacy](#), a concept Dave championed. "Relations between countries depend on relationships between people. United Planet helps prove, person by person, that what unites us is far more powerful than what divides us. The work Dave started could not be more important."

In an emotional address, Dave reflected on the early experiences that planted the seeds for what would eventually become United Planet. He shared, "It is a rare moment to have so many of the most important people in your life gathered together. My journey began when I was a teenager traveling abroad for the first time, meeting people whose lives and hopes were so different yet



so familiar. Experiences like those planted a seed in me, a wish for more goodwill, more trust, and closer relationships among people both across communities and around the world. That wish eventually became United Planet. I am humbled beyond words to see how that small idea has grown into a global community shaped by thousands of leaders, volunteers, partners, and friends. Everything we have accomplished has been a collective effort. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has carried this torch with me and who continues to believe in a more peaceful, sustainable, and united planet."

UNITED PLANET ANNOUNCES THE DAVID SANTULLI SCHOLARSHIP FOR RELATIONAL DIPLOMACY

In a surprise announcement, the Board and CEO Jill Tracy introduced the David Santulli Scholarship for Relational Diplomacy, an annual award that will support individuals participating in long term global service programs. The scholarship will recognize participants who demonstrate the qualities Dave brought to United Planet including humility, generosity, commitment to service, and a genuine passion for building meaningful relationships across cultures.

In response to the announcement, Dave shared that the scholarship "means the world" to him and called it a powerful way to open doors for others. He reflected, "I know how much a single cross cultural experience can change the course of a life. I was only thirteen when I had mine. That one trip shifted my understanding of the world and shaped everything that followed. This scholarship will plant seeds in deserving people who will go out into the world, build bridges of understanding, and bring goodwill into places that need it. That is what relational diplomacy is all about, and I am honored that this scholarship will help carry that idea forward for many years to come."



NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP REFLECTED IN CEO JILL TRACY'S VISION

United Planet CEO Jill Tracy shared her own journey during the celebration and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to expanding global service, fostering meaningful human connection, and advancing relational diplomacy. She spoke about her experiences abroad as a young person and how those shaped her decision to devote her life to global service. She reflected on the importance of continuing the mission in a time of global uncertainty, emphasizing the need for strong partnerships, sustainable operations, and collective leadership. Jill expressed her gratitude to Dave for his trust and to the United Planet team and community for their commitment to building a more united world.

"My life was changed by global experiences, just like Dave's," she said. "This mission matters now more than ever. We are building bridges of understanding and creating new opportunities that change lives, both for those who travel and for the communities we serve. I look forward to carrying this mission forward with our global team and partners."

CELEBRATING 24 YEARS OF GLOBAL IMPACT

This week marks United Planet's 24th anniversary. The celebration recognized the organization's evolution from its earliest days in a small Boston office to its presence in more than seventy countries today. The evening included reflections on its history, stories from its global partners, and a video montage highlighting voices from communities around the world. Speakers emphasized the organization's unique model of relational diplomacy and its ability to bring people together across cultures to work toward shared goals.

LOOKING AHEAD

As United Planet approaches its 25th year, the organization is committed to strengthening its mission and expanding its reach. The tribute dinner closed with a collective call to help ensure the long term sustainability of United Planet's programs and the continued growth of Dave's vision for a more peaceful and connected world.

United Planet invites supporters, partners, and community members to help sustain and grow this work. Contributions directly support program development, global partnerships, volunteer access, and the David Santulli Scholarship for Relational Diplomacy. Donations ensure that United Planet can continue building a more united world, one relationship at a time. To make a contribution or learn more, please visit [United Planet's website](#).

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