



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OWN: OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK TO AIR 10-PART DOCUMENTARY SERIES**  
**“OPERATION CHANGE” PREMIERING MONDAY, JUNE 23**

**Celebrities and Philanthropists Including President Bill Clinton, Sir Elton John, Sir Richard Branson, Donna Karan, Harry Connick, Jr., Ray Lewis and Many More Tackle Some Of The World’s Most Challenging Issues**



*President Bill Clinton in Colombia (left) and Elton John in Malaysia (right)*

*Photos Courtesy of OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network*

*High-res downloadable images: <https://owncomm.box.com/s/x313tcra28es0yc357lo>*

Los Angeles, CA – OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network will air the 10-part documentary series “Operation Change” premiering on **Monday, June 23 at 10 p.m. ET/PT**. The series follows Bill & Tani Austin and their son Steven Sawalich from the Starkey Hearing Foundation, a global non-profit organization that gives free hearing aids to those in need, as they are joined by celebrities and philanthropists to tackle some of the most challenging issues plaguing our world today.

“Operation Change” gives viewers unprecedented access to some of the world’s most dangerous, desolate and poverty-stricken places. The series features former President Bill Clinton, Sir Richard Branson, Sir Elton John, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Donna Karan, and Harry Connick, Jr. among many others, each working to benefit a different region and local organization. From the West Bank of Palestine to the wilds of Papua New Guinea, this documentary series reveals the untold stories of some of the world’s seemingly insurmountable challenges, as well as its greatest heroes.

“Hearing loss is a global epidemic, impacting more than 360 million people worldwide, yet it can often be helped. Hearing aids empower people to better connect with their families,

communities, and the larger world,” said President Bill Clinton. “I have seen first-hand the amazing impact that the Starkey Hearing Foundation and Starkey Hearing Technologies are having on people all around the world. I am lucky to call Bill and Tani Austin as well as Steven Sawalich my friends. And I am proud of the Clinton Foundation’s relationship with them and this work. It’s empowering people to live more independent, prosperous, joyful lives.”

“Working with this family, and supporting their efforts through the Starkey Hearing Foundation, has been an incredibly uplifting experience for me,” said Sir Elton John. “When people are cared for and not forgotten, their human spirit comes alive, and that’s why when they approached me, I had to be a part of ‘Operation Change.’ I know everyone who watches this series will want to be a part of it as well. My friend Oprah Winfrey’s network, OWN, is the perfect vehicle for this groundbreaking series.”

"Our family has always found fulfillment in helping others," said Steven Sawalich, of Starkey Hearing Foundation and CEO/President of Artculus Entertainment. "Through our charitable efforts, we have seen firsthand the needs and challenges people face all over the world. With the help of some of our celebrity supporters and local partners, “Operation Change” chronicles how together we can make a difference in the lives of people around the globe. We are thrilled to share this emotionally-compelling series with OWN viewers."

Each week, Bill Austin, his family, volunteers and a different celebrity/philanthropist will partner with local organizations that are working to empower their community. Throughout the hour, they work together to complete a sustainable project that will help enhance the lives of people in need. The family will immerse themselves in local cultures and experience firsthand what life is like for people in that region.

The series is produced by Artculus Entertainment. Executive produced by Steven Sawalich, Natalee Watts and Teri Weinberg. Melinda Cea is co-executive producer.

Click here for a sneak peek of the series (with embed code):

<http://qa.teaser.starkey.possible.com/#video>

Below is an overview of the regions featured in the documentary series:

### **Operation Change: Haiti**

Three years after one of the most horrific earthquakes ever recorded, the team comes face to face with a nation struggling to survive. In the tent cities of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, lives a man who ties himself to his children at night because he fears they will be kidnapped. In Jacmel, a woman is still reeling from the death of her son, whom she lost shortly after the earthquake. The team works with fashion designer **Donna Karan**, actress **Maria Bello**, entrepreneur **Bill Rancic**, and non-profit organizations including World Wide Village, We Advance (co-founded by Bello) and Karan’s Urban Zen.

### **Operation Change: Colombia**

The team immerses themselves in one of the most dangerous slums in Bogota, Colombia. They focus their efforts on building a community center out of plastic bottles for displaced refugees, who fear for their lives at the hands of guerrilla militia. Here, the team works with former **President Bill Clinton**, actress **Marlee Matlin** and the non-profit organization Nukanti Foundation for Children.

### **Operation Change: India**

This episode explores the millions of orphans who face abusive households and flock to India's large cities, only to become victims of sex trafficking and child slavery. While these children beg, borrow, and steal for survival, the team struggles to educate them before they become prey to the ruthless life of the streets. The team works with **His Holiness the Dalai Lama** and the non-profit organization Salaam Baalak Trust.

### **Operation Change: South Africa**

Beyond bringing HIV/AIDS medication to the wild bush lands, the team travels out to aid local clinics that work to provide much-needed food, water and education before the epidemic claims another life. The team works with **Sir Richard Branson** and non-profit organizations including Virgin Unite, Bhubezi Health Centre and Ulusaba Pride 'N Purpose.

### **Operation Change: Lebanon**

Beneath the bombed-out shell that hides the 'Paris of the Middle East,' thousands fear that tomorrow will never come. As the team fights for sustainability, they join local activists to build a skate park and save an endangered community outlet on the brink of being shut down. The team works with non-profit organizations including Ayadina and Lebanese Skateboarding Association.

### **Operation Change: Malaysia**

In a booming Asian metropolis, one segment of the population has been deemed a burden by society, and the team fights to change perceptions and create opportunities, while discovering just how able the disabled really are. Here, the team works with **Sir Elton John**, World Champion Boxer **Manny Pacquiao** and the non-profit organization The Beautiful Gate Foundation.

### **Operation Change: Israel and Palestine**

Trapped on the border of two warring territories, volunteers experience firsthand the tension between Israel and Palestine. With the help of peace activists from both sides, they strive to cultivate understanding among children and those whose lives are constrained by a wall. The team works with singer/musician/actor **Harry Connick, Jr.** and the non-profit organization The Parents Circle Families Forum.

### **Operation Change: Tanzania**

The last remaining traditional tribe of Africa, the Maasai, is battling lions and hyenas for one resource: water. Far removed from modern-day conveniences, volunteers work to obtain a

sustainable supply of water and are supported there by football players **Greg Jennings, Tommie Harris, Larry Fitzgerald, Ray Lewis** and the non-profit organization WorldServe.

### **Operation Change: Ethiopia**

More than one million Ethiopians suffer from an unsightly, yet preventable condition, Mossy Foot disease, which renders them outcasts from society. Providing assistance and education, Bill, Tani and Steven work with the non-profit organization Mossy Foot Foundation to overcome the fear and prejudice surrounding this disease.

### **Operation Change: Papua New Guinea**

In the land of the unexpected, the team travels into a jungle to help a village plagued by tribal warfare fueled by the drug trade. They work with the non-profit organization Touching The Untouchables.

### **ABOUT OWN: OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK**

OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network is the first and only network named for, and inspired by, a single iconic leader. Oprah Winfrey's heart and creative instincts inform the brand – and the magnetism of the channel. Winfrey provides leadership in programming and attracts superstar talent to join her in primetime, building a global community of like-minded viewers and leading that community to connect on social media and beyond. OWN is a singular destination on cable. Depth with edge. Heart. Star power. Connection. And endless possibilities. OWN is a joint venture between Harpo, Inc. and Discovery Communications. The network debuted on January 1, 2011 and is available in 85 million homes. The venture also includes the award-winning digital platform [Oprah.com](http://Oprah.com). For more information, please visit [www.oprah.com/own](http://www.oprah.com/own) and [www.press.discovery.com/us/own](http://www.press.discovery.com/us/own).

### **ABOUT ARTICULUS ENTERTAINMENT**

Articulus Entertainment, Inc. is a film and television production company founded in 2004 by Steven Sawalich. As a filmmaker, Sawalich gives artistic expression to the conviction that individuals can make a difference in our world. His signature film, "Music Within," illuminates the journey of Richard Pimentel. Articulus recently wrapped a television documentary series event that forges new ground, "Operation Change" bringing firsthand, grassroots international aid experiences to a wide audience in an entirely new cinematic format. Articulus is committed to provide commercially successful and critically acclaimed movies, television and original programming events to audiences worldwide.

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