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## **BIPAI honors President Bush, Laura Bush with Leadership Award**

HOUSTON -- (May 21, 2009) -- President George W. Bush and Laura Bush received the 2009 Leadership Award from the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative Wednesday night.

Each year BIPAI honors leadership in promoting awareness and advancing care and treatment for HIV-infected children and families globally. The award was given during a dinner held as part of BIPAI's annual network meeting of program officials. The dinner was held at the home of Jan and Dan Duncan in Houston.

Dr. Mark Kline, president of BIPAI, presented the award, citing President Bush's creation of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Laura Bush's role as an advocate for mothers and children suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Since its creation in 2003, PEPFAR has saved more than 1.1 million lives and reduced AIDS-related deaths by more than 10 percent in countries across sub-Saharan Africa. Laura Bush made five separate trips to the African continent and conveyed the human face of the pandemic to the American people, said Kline, a professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and chief of retrovirology at Texas Children's Hospital.

"President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush did not turn away in Africa's time of need. They chose decisive action, and millions of African men, women and children have been the beneficiaries," Kline said.

More than 200 attended the awards dinner, including BIPAI network members from across the world, leaders from Baylor and Texas Children's and program supporters.

Past recipients of the Leadership Award include Botswana President Festus Mogae, Duke University Professor Catherine Wilfert, United Nations Envoy for AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis and Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation President John Damonti.

BIPAI opened its first children's HIV/AIDS center of excellence in 2001 in Romania. It now has programs in eight countries in Africa, in addition to Romania and the United States. Through its Pediatric AIDS Corps, American physicians assist local health care workers in all of the centers in Africa. The physicians commit to at least one year of service, though most request to serve additional years.

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