

## **Laila's Gift Announces Walmart as Corporate Gifter of the Year During 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Gifter's Gala!**

*The goal was to raise funding by Dec. 31 to celebrate the birthdays and significant milestones of children with special needs throughout 2023 while supporting the essential work of the nonprofit.*

BALTIMORE – January 17, 2023 - **Laila's Gift**, a nonprofit which celebrates children with special needs and disabilities, and sheds light on the challenges of special needs families, announced the successful completion of its year-end fundraising gala to benefit the organization. Laila's Gift is a champion for the special needs community by providing ongoing resources, support, and encouragement.

The Gifter's Gala, was held on Dec. 17, 2022 at The Port Discovery Children's Museum Downtown Baltimore MD, which included fundraising efforts and a night filled with special needs awareness, insights from keynote speakers, and community and professional recognitions. The charitable initiative is the brainchild of change influencer Shari Bailey, the mother of 8-year-old twin daughters, one of whom has the rare congenital disorder, Jacobsen Syndrome.

The goal was to raise funding by Dec. 31 from the event and crowdsourcing campaign to celebrate the birthdays and significant milestones of children with special needs throughout 2023, acknowledging the many challenges they face. The nonprofit recognizes the challenges faced year over year by the children and families impacted and celebrates them for their tenacity and determination to overcome their daily challenges.

Walmart was announced *Corporate Gifter of The Year* during the gala as a result of almost \$20,000 in monetary donations from several stores in the Maryland area.

“As a special needs mom, this movement is near and dear to my heart,” said Bailey. “Our organization is overwhelmed with joy from the support received by Walmart to further our mission. Laila's Gift aims to bring a smile to children with special needs and their families because tomorrow is never promised and their collective perseverance to overcome hardships deserves to be celebrated! My girls inspire me to help others and share my skills and knowledge with a community whose lives have been impacted by raising a child with special needs. To me, their child's unique gift is a blessing they share with every person they encounter. The more we understand their conditions and work together to help them feel included is of utmost importance to the work of our nonprofit. We hope the partnership with Walmart continues and inspires others within our community to support our cause.”

For many children with special needs, each birthday is a milestone due to health complications and other adversities. Not limited to birthdays, the nonprofit also celebrates milestones such as first steps, first words, successful surgeries, graduations and so much more.

Bailey's daughter, Laila, was diagnosed with Jacobsen Syndrome at birth. The rare congenital condition occurs in approximately 1 in 100,000 newborns. Roughly 20% to 25% of all infants with this disorder pass away before age two.

Additional fundraising endeavors include the recent launch of **zigglebee**, a children's book by Laila's sister, Lana, encouraging engagement through creativity and the arts. A percentage of proceeds from each book is donated to **Laila's Gift**.

For more information and ways to give, visit [www.lailasgift.org](http://www.lailasgift.org)

**About Laila's Gift and Shari Bailey:**

Laila's Gift is a nonprofit organization established in 2022 to shed light on the challenges of being a special needs parent and family member. It also promotes inclusion by highlighting the blessing each special needs child brings to the people they encounter. Founder Shari Bailey is mom to twin daughters, one of whom was diagnosed with Jacobsen Syndrome at birth. She tirelessly works to raise awareness about the rare congenital condition and is a spokesperson for raising children with special needs.