



Meet our 2013 WOMAN of THE YEAR

It takes a courageous individual to tackle an issue as vast as child poverty. But this inspirational Kiwi turned her back on a lucrative career to do just that. We pay tribute to KidsCan founder Julie Chapman, our supreme winner

BY CATH BENNETT

JULIE CHAPMAN: COMMUNITY

Thanks to Julie Chapman more than 10,000 vulnerable Kiwi kids didn't go hungry last week. The dynamic founder of KidsCan is NEXT's supreme 2013 Woman of the Year because of her incredible work in transforming the lives of New Zealand's most needy children. But while her achievements in providing crisis food and essential clothing to almost 50,000 youngsters in the country's lowest decile schools have been massive, in her own mind, the 40-year-old's work has just begun.

"I'm proud of what we've achieved, but there's so much more to do," says Chapman, who was also winner of the community category in our awards. "By the end of 2013 we'll be in 400 schools nationwide, but by 2016 we expect to double that. And the ultimate vision is to have a place called KidsCan Nurture Farm, teaching children essential life skills."

As she talks excitedly about her plans, there's no 'if'; it's simply a matter of 'when'. This is a woman who eight years ago had a dream of making a tangible difference to the >>

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one in four Kiwi kids who live in poverty – and made it reality. A visionary who, had she chosen to turn her considerable skills in planning, marketing and leadership in another direction, would be a very wealthy woman. Instead, her riches come from the rewards of her work.

“I don’t think money is everything,” the glamorous blonde says with a beaming smile. “You’ll never get rich working for a charity, but I’m just happy where I’m at. I love what I do. I love getting up in the morning; it’s not work to me.” And it’s undoubtedly that passion that’s made Chapman one of the country’s most effective spokespeople on child poverty, putting the issue firmly in the public eye. Over eight years she’s developed KidsCan into one of New Zealand’s most recognised and successful charities, one which has enjoyed partnerships with the All Blacks and the Warriors, been responsible for the revival of TV event Telethon, and influenced government agenda. Not bad for an enterprise which was launched in Chapman’s Auckland garage.

THOSE WHO CAN

When the average person hears a tale of woe that doesn’t directly affect them, they’ll offer sympathy, platitudes of support, and little more. But when in 2005 Chapman was told in passing conversation about malnourished kids in a nearby school who were being kept home by their parents when it rained because they didn’t have appropriate clothing, she pledged to do something about it.

“That was the lightbulb moment for me,” says Chapman, who didn’t have kids of her own at the time, but is now stepmum to seven-year-old Elise. “I thought, ‘Why is no one doing something about this?’ I grew up with a strong belief instilled in me that education equals opportunity. It shocked me to think children could miss out on education and reaching their potential because they didn’t have the basics I had when I was a child.”

At the time Chapman, a former marketing manager for Child Flight Air Ambulance, was a fundraising and marketing consultant, mainly working in the not-for-profit sector where “I found my purpose and what I wanted to do in life”. Keen to discover how widespread child poverty was, she researched 80 low decile schools. Finding hundreds of students were truanting, going hungry or stealing food, simply because their parents were unable to provide for them, “spurred me into action; I love children, and I just had this compulsion to make a difference.” So she created the blueprint for KidsCan, basing the name around the fact “kids can be everything they want to be, they can reach their potential”.

“I wanted to do something tangible through which you could measure the outcomes and results,” explains Chapman, who was unable to find any other charities – here or internationally, which worked in the format she planned. “You need food, clothing and shoes to be able to participate actively at school – and in life. It was about creating an organisation which provided those things for the children. It seemed quite simple, but



sometimes it’s the simplest things that are overlooked.”

Putting together a business plan, Chapman contacted financial planning company Guardian Trust – which gave KidsCan a \$40,000 grant to set up and start providing kids in decile one to four schools nationwide with raincoats and crisis food. Working with her ex-husband Carl Sutherland, who has since left the organisation, within six months Chapman had boosted the coffers of KidsCan to \$600,000. After a couple of years she moved operations out of her garage into her current offices on Auckland’s North Shore, and the charity has grown year on year since, now boasting a \$5 million budget as it supports 48,000 children. Many have been given raincoats or shoes, others make use of Health for Kids which provides items including nit combs and hand-wash, and 10,585 youngsters nationwide have daily access to crisis food such as cereal, bread and fruit pots.

The difference KidsCan has made isn’t just reflected in the mountains of letters from grateful kids and teachers which pour onto Chapman’s desk weekly. Research conducted by Massey University concluded the charity is having a major impact in alleviating social problems, increasing participation and raising self-esteem among the kids it benefits. “I think when we started the teachers were a bit cautious, what we were offering almost sounded too good to be true,” says Chapman, who

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recalls kids getting into trouble for stealing lunches back when she was at west Auckland’s Oratia Primary – and now recognises why they were doing it. “But very early on the schools were giving us feedback that having the food was reducing stealing and bullying, kids were less disruptive and were able to concentrate and learn.”

NEVER GIVE UP

While she modestly credits the efforts of the 14 staff at KidsCan, there’s no doubting Chapman is the driving force behind the change this charity is making. She thinks nothing of working 70 hours a week, and it’s clear her mind is always on the job. On a recent trip overseas for a wedding, she spotted *Star Wars* actor Jay Laga’aia at Sydney airport – and immediately approached him to see if he’d get on board with KidsCan. Chapman’s habit of promoting her charity’s cause in the most unlikely of places is something husband Cain, 42, a sales manager, is well accustomed to when the couple are out for dinner.

“If I ever see a politician I always approach them,” says Chapman, who ironically describes herself as an introvert who often feels intimidated in a room full of strangers. “It doesn’t come naturally but I make myself do it because I 100% believe we need to address child poverty and create social change. I live and breathe the cause.”

Building KidsCan hasn’t always been plain sailing, but the tenacious CEO is adept at turning challenges into positives. Before she met her first husband, she was a victim of domestic violence, and on escaping the situation volunteered for Victim Support when she was just 20. For 10 years she was regularly on-call to attend harrowing incidents with police. Far from viewing her own experience with bitterness, she says it “shaped me into the person I am today”. She perceives KidsCan challenges in much the same way.

In the early days a major sponsor pulled out, threatening the future of the charity. Chapman responded by working twice as hard to get new backing and resolved to develop more diverse income streams. In 2009 when Chapman relaunched Telethon after 15 years, there were claims only 18 cents in each dollar of the \$2 million raised went to the kids; reports which led to KidsCan staff receiving hate mail and death threats. Chapman kept calm, released an audit which proved 80 cents in the dollar was going to the children, and pledged to become one of the country’s most transparent charities.

“At no point did I ever think ‘I’m going to give up now’ – I don’t give up easily,” Chapman says vehemently. “If someone says ‘no’, I always believe you can find another way to achieve something.” And rather than looking at the past, right now Chapman is bursting with ideas for the future. Confident within a few years KidsCan programmes will support all of the country’s 1016 low decile schools who want them, she is now looking at decile five and six schools, “because we know there is a huge need there which isn’t being met currently”.

The keen animal lover, who has two dogs, five cats and also finds time to volunteer for stray cat charity Forgotten Felines, has also formulated a business plan for the KidsCan Nurture Farm, which will house rescue animals which children can interact with.

“We’re alleviating poverty now, but this is about teaching children life skills that are missing, such as cooking, gardening – and in particular empathy,” says Chapman, who has personal ambitions of joining a board – “we need more women on boards”.

For this dynamo of a woman there is no end in sight, but she’s happy with that, having long ago reconciled herself to the fact addressing child poverty “was going to be my life’s work.” “You’ll have to wheel me out of here in a coffin!” she says laughing as she looks around her office adorned with kids’ thank you notes, newspaper cuttings and messages of support from sports stars. “I’m driven by fear of failure. I might think something’s really good, but we can always do better. I’m not sure I’ll ever get to that point where I can stop.”



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:



THERESA GATTUNG

“We all know underachievement is a reality for children in New Zealand, which government policy is attempting to address. However, it starts with children being fed and clothed. Most people know there is an issue but turn a blind eye and get on with their lives. Julie Chapman tackled the ‘elephant in the room’ that is poverty in New Zealand in an extremely effective way, engaging with communities, corporates and media. The results speak for themselves.”

A leading businesswoman, author and former CEO of Telecom, Gattung grew up believing women could do anything. She holds a number of governance positions and supports groups dedicated to empowering women.



MARTIN SNEDDEN

“A belief that everyone in life deserves the opportunity to succeed has driven Julie to create something which is both special and yet pragmatic and practical. Through KidsCan she’s making a huge difference, one child at a time.”

The former cricketer was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to sporting administration last year. Prior to that he headed the 2011 Rugby World Cup organising team. He’s now chief executive of the Tourism Industry Association.



SARAH HENRY

“It’s her ‘never give up’ attitude and belief in what she does that’s kept Julie going. Despite setbacks she’s proved she has what it takes to keep pushing for change, which is why she’s just what we’re looking for in our Woman of the Year.”

Over the past 10 years Henry has been features editor of *The Australian Women’s Weekly* and editor of top-selling magazines *Woman’s Day* and now *NEXT*. The award-winning journalist is driven to recognise and showcase the talent, dedication and passion of New Zealand women achieving greatness. >>

Leading LIGHTS

It's impossible not to feel inspired by our five extraordinary category winners BY SARAH LANG

BRONWEN CONNOR: HEALTH & SCIENCE

Brace yourself for a scary statistic: one in five New Zealanders do or will suffer from debilitating and deadly brain disorders including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Huntington's, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis and stroke. Thankfully, Bronwen Connor is on the job. The University of Auckland associate professor in pharmacology is the country's leading researcher in cell-replacement therapy for brain diseases.

At just 40, she's director of neurodiscovery at the world-class Centre for Brain Research, a partnership between scientists, clinicians and the community based at the University of Auckland. As head of the neural repair and neurogenesis laboratory, Connor currently leads nine stem-cell research projects and a team of 10 students and technicians. Her research focus is using stem cells to develop innovative strategies to replace brain cells lost through disease or injury.

"Everything's about a potential treatment. I don't do clinical trials but help develop therapies, or provide puzzle pieces which help others develop therapies," Connor explains. "These diseases are very hard to treat, and in the future we won't be treating them with tablets but with unique treatments that don't sound like medicines: things like replacing cells."

Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka, who pioneered the six-year-old field of cell reprogramming, won the

2012 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery that mature cells can be reprogrammed into stem cells. Last year, in a world first, Connor discovered how to create immature brain cells directly from the patient's own skin by inserting two genes involved in brain development into skin cells.

Until now, the inability to study living human brain cells had limited the development of new treatments. But, from 2013, researchers can take Connor's immature brain cells, grow them into mature brain cells, and study them, rather than relying on donated brains with end-stage disease. "From there, we can identify possible treatments," Connor says. Her discovery also eliminates the issues of donor-tissue rejection and ethical concerns about using stem cells from embryos.

Connor made this breakthrough with two lab members and minimal funding at a time when bigger, better funded international groups were still studying rodent cells. "We thought 'Let's try adult human skin cells', which no one else had done. It worked straight away, and we're really excited."

She has filed an international patent, is marketing 'kits' of the cells to other researchers, and is fielding enquiries from biotech companies interested in developing treatments.

Passionate about communicating science as well as



'Everything's about a potential

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doing it, Connor gives regular public lectures about brain research and stem-cell therapy. "Unfortunately a few bogus clinics internationally and nationally offer treatments that aren't valid, using supposed stem cells. My job isn't to tell people what to do – it's to educate so people can make a sound decision." Connor also visits schools to explain the human brain and get kids switched on to science.

She has her own kids: Dylan, 10, and Noah, six. The secret to juggling solo motherhood with her career? "Organisation. I've learned to work smartly and efficiently, but some weeks I feel like I haven't paused for breath." Connor, who doesn't think the government funds enough scientific research, says she spends too much time applying for sought-after grants. "I'm like a small-business owner, constantly trying to find the money to run the business, when what I love is overseeing the lab and the students."

Over the past decade, Connor has trained, supervised and mentored 22 graduate students in her lab. "What's cool is one student, who's now overseas, is taking my post-doctoral work on gene-therapy treatment for Parkinson's disease to clinical trial. My students feel like my family. Some have their life mapped out, and I tell them 'Everything that's happened to me has just happened. Just develop your passion, say yes to opportunities, and see what comes out the other end.'"

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:

Bronwen has shown it is possible for Kiwi women to be innovators in a field that hasn't had that many visible role models for young women. Her success has been achieved making best use of comparatively limited resources. >>



HINEWEHI MOHI:
ARTS & CULTURE

There are busy women, and then there’s Hinewehi Mohi. The 48-year-old is co-founder of Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre, a television producer, a singer-songwriter, and a mother to a blended family of six children. Her husband George Bradfield’s four kids are grown up and having their own families, while Mohi’s niece Rahia, 14, and daughter Hineraukatauri, 17, live at home in Sandringham, Auckland.

Hineraukatauri, who’s had cerebral palsy since birth, can’t talk or walk, is fed through a stomach tube, has trouble sleeping, and needs constant care from family and caregivers at home and at school. She’s named after Raukatauri: the Māori goddess of flutes who, as a moth trapped in a cocoon, found an escape in music. It was seeing how music therapy helped her daughter in the UK – and finding nothing like it at home – that inspired Mohi and Bradfield to found the private music therapy centre in 2004. The Auckland not-for-profit organisation, which gets no state funding, helps more than 100 special needs kids at the centre and in schools. “After my family, the centre is my biggest personal achievement,” Mohi says. “For kids who find communication difficult, music therapy’s such an important outlet for expression and emotion. When I meet parents and children, it’s very emotional because they’re just so happy.”

Mohi, a deeply involved trustee, has brought patrons Hayley Westenra, Boh Runga and Peter Gordon on board as well as musical ambassadors who perform at fundraising events. This year Mohi staged and performed at a gala that raised \$185,000, and organised a Matariki feast that raised nearly \$20,000. The centre also gets all profits from Mohi’s new album *Raukatauri - Te Puhi o te Tangi*. Mohi’s singer-songwriter career took off in 1999 with *Oceania*, which sold 100,000-plus copies worldwide and was dubbed the first contemporary Māori album. With Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngai Tūhoe ancestry, Mohi sings solely in Māori both because she loves the lush sound and to champion te reo. On the opening night of the 1999 Rugby World Cup, she was the first-ever person to sing the national anthem in te reo (off her own bat). “I felt it truly reflected our uniqueness as a country but I didn’t mean to cause such a furore.” National debate led to a government directive: that the anthem should be sung in both

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:

Hinewehi is an inspiration in showing it's not what happens to you in life that matters but how you handle it. She's a courageous leader who isn't afraid to challenge the status quo.



languages at sports events and other ceremonies.

We haven’t even mentioned her day job yet. A long-time TV producer, Mohi worked at TVNZ from 1990-1997, latterly as Māori programmes producer. Quitting to have Hineraukatauri, then breaking up with the dad, Mohi returned to TV in 2003. Working through independent company Raukatauri Productions, which she runs with Bradfield, she’s produced award-winning shows for Māori TV, many focusing on Māori language, culture, music and performing arts. In July, she left the company in her husband’s hands to become Māori TV’s programme commissioner. All this just two years after she battled breast cancer, eventually having a double mastectomy and reconstruction. Mohi spoke about it publicly to encourage breast screening, particularly among Māori and Pacific women who aren’t detecting cancer soon enough.

“If I motivate just one woman to pick up a cancer early, I’d be so happy,” she says. “And it was important I get something positive out of something so devastating.” She’s well now, and has six-monthly check-ups. “It’s a bit scary, but I have so much support and aroha around me.”

Dame Rosie Horton, a board member at the music therapy centre, says she is “in complete awe of Hinewehi. She’s a magnificent philanthropist, woman, mother and visionary.”

Music therapy is such an important outlet for expression and emotion. When I meet parents and children, it's very emotional because they're just so happy'



What drives me is seeing the ripple effect women are having on agriculture and their communities'

LINDY NELSON:
BUSINESS & INNOVATION

If there's one lesson learned from Fonterra's botulism scare, it's the importance of agribusiness to our economy. Which is why Lindy Nelson has battled for women with knowledge and skills in the sector to have a voice. The former nurse, 50, has a sheep and beef farm in Eketahuna with husband David. "When we started farming 27 years ago, the idea farming women would be anything other than an unpaid extra pair of hands was unheard of," she says. Later, as she got involved in community organisations and initiatives, Nelson kept asking herself: "Why are so few agricultural women in leadership roles in the industry and their communities?" And so Nelson independently conducted and self-funded three-year research project 'Unlocking Potential in Rural Women'. She interviewed 50 women nationwide who'd successfully transitioned into leadership roles, and ran focus groups with women who wanted to but didn't know how. She found the main barriers were a lack of education and support, particularly at that pivotal point when the kids are grown and women have a bit more time. Nelson, whose children are 24, 22 and 16, has been there. "Because these women had usually been in unpaid roles, many doubted their skills and abilities." Determined to make a change, Nelson set up the Agri-Women's Development Trust (AWDT) in 2010, covering most expenses herself and working unpaid for the first two years as executive director. Over 60-80-hour weeks, she set up an expert board, and built partnerships

and sponsorships with the likes of DairyNZ, Beef+Lamb NZ, Agmardt and ANZ Bank. Annual funding is now \$300,000. Nelson, who runs the trust from home with an assistant, has always hated fundraising. "But now I can walk into a corporate office and ask for \$50,000 because it's not about me, it's about the women." To develop the skills, confidence and leadership of agricultural women, the trust's two flagship schemes work with their individual strengths, and provide them with the tools and mentoring to create and achieve goals. All 11 graduates from the 2010 pilot of Escalator, a 10-month leadership-and-governance programme, are now in leadership roles. First Steps, a two-day scheme followed by monthly meet-ups, followed in 2011. Now run by past participants, the courses get around the barriers of finance (women pay only a quarter of costs), access (courses primarily run regionally), and time (courses fit round other commitments). With 300 graduates countrywide and waiting lists, these two schemes have helped numerous women make that leap into leadership. "What drives me is seeing the ripple effect women are having on agriculture and their communities," Nelson says. "Industry leaders are seeing the difference our programmes are making for women and for agriculture, and are asking us to help solve problems." Even after the 2008 drought, when the farm lost money, Nelson didn't give up on the project, showing courage, grit and vision. "When you really believe in something, it gives you strength." >>



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:
In a sector that can be resistant to change, Lindy has pioneered a model to bring to the fore female leadership. Lindy is selflessly driven to empower others to unlock leadership skills within themselves that otherwise might not see the light of day.



JULIE KING: EDUCATION

Julie King has stuttered since she was five. “At school I didn’t talk much and was naughty to deflect attention from my stutter,” she recalls. When King was 16, a teacher told her to ditch her dream of teaching because the best she could hope for was stacking supermarket shelves. “That just made me even more determined.”

Nearly 40 years on, King is no ordinary teacher. Her specialty is educating the educators of special-needs learners, who may have impaired sight or vision, or severe educational, behavioural, social or emotional needs and slow rates of learning. In 2008 she was running a technology workshop for special-education principals when inspiration struck. What if special schools and units, which worked in relative isolation, had a website to access resources, share expertise and work collaboratively? The

idea was a hit, and special schools hired her part-time to set up clickspecialednz.com. ‘ClickNZ’ went live in September 2009, and King became fulltime national co-ordinator of the Click SpecialED Trust.

Four years on, the site is used by all New Zealand’s 29 special schools, its six residential special schools, special-education units within mainstream schools, some mainstream schools, and in 60 countries, territories and states. Principals, teachers and teacher aides use it to access curriculum, planning and research papers, and other resources. It saves time and enables them to share ideas, forge bonds and, most important, improve student learning. The site is ClickNZ’s hub but King is ClickNZ. Working a six-day week from her Auckland home, she spends a third of her time on the site and the rest developing and facilitating other initiatives, including a sensory learning toolkit to help learners with severe disabilities, a national special-education conference, and a fun online scheme where students teach others to play the ukulele. Special-education teachers also rave about the professional-learning and professional-development groups King runs countrywide. She doesn’t let her stutter stop her; when she’s stuck on a word, she spells it one letter at a time; the first to correctly guess it gets a prize. She also speaks at international workshops and conferences, where she convinces overseas experts to come down under to speak to special-education professionals.

King’s known for her sense of humour and innovation, but most of all for her collaboration. Working with special-education principals and teachers, she drove the development of ground-breaking curriculum ‘The Key Competencies Pathway’ (KCP), which adapts the New Zealand curriculum into relevant, accessible approaches for special education, with goal setting and progress markers. Now in its final stages of development, it’s been piloted in 30 special schools and picked up by special-education units, with a ripple effect on student learning.

King’s done all this and more with no government funding. Visiting classrooms reminds her why she works so hard. “Often it’s hard to engage students with complex needs, so I love seeing their engagement, motivation and confidence grow. I believe every child has the right to the best possible learning experiences, and should be encouraged to pursue their interests, strengths and dreams.”

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:

Julie has created a unique way of using the internet for the good of the community. Through commitment, innovation and excellent communication and relationship skills, she has developed a learning tool of massive importance to many.

STYLING FOR JULIE CHAPMAN: SONIA GREENSLADE MAKEUP: SHARON LAURENCE-ANDERSON. ROZ THOMSON AND LUSA PETCH PHOTOGRAPHS: JESSIE CASSON AND ALAN DOVE JULIE CHAPMAN WEARS PAGE 52 DRESS FARMERS JEWELLERY PANDORA PAGE 52 JACKET GREGORY T SHIRT ISAKELLE PANTS WITCHERY



SUZIE BATES: SPORT

“Gran always used to tell me girls with bosoms shouldn’t play rugby,” says Suzie Bates, captain of national women’s cricket team the White Ferns. “But she got used to it.” A tomboy with two older brothers, Bates spent years playing in boys’ rugby, cricket, basketball, and soccer teams. There simply weren’t any girls’ teams.

Although she had to travel to out-of-town matches with a busload of smelly boys, and use a different changing room, she quickly adjusted and earned respect as a player. “I played every sport, but by high school I had to choose: basketball in winter and cricket in summer.” Back then, her role model was former Kiwi cricketer Chris Cairns. She didn’t imagine she’d ever play for the White Ferns until some of them coached her at a tournament, and she saw them win the 2000 World Cup on TV. “I thought ‘Wow, girls play and they’re on TV.’ It’s all about having female role models.”

At just 19, she was picked for the White Ferns and for national women’s basketball team the Tall Ferns, becoming a double international. At 24, she put basketball aside to become White Ferns captain. At first the star all-rounder didn’t want to captain, uncomfortable about leap-frogging respected senior players. “But I did it, and it’s been the best thing for my leadership and my game.” That same year she began captaining regional side the Otago Sparks. After spending four years fitting physical-education papers around her sporting commitments, she opted to focus on study full-time in 2011. Finishing her degree in mid-2012, she became the first Kiwi to play in the Australian Women’s National Cricket League. Then came her career highlight so far: scoring 122 for the White Ferns against Australia to convincingly win the

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:

To be an international representative in two sports, complete a physical education degree and take time out to inspire girls, all before the age of 26, is a significant achievement. Those around Suzie are inspired by her front-foot leadership.

game, and later the Rose Bowl series. She wasn’t so happy at the 2013 Women’s Cricket World Cup in India in February, when New Zealand placed fourth. But Bates, the tournament’s highest scoring batswoman, was named player of the tournament, captain of the tournament team (the tournament’s best 11 players), and shortly afterwards was ranked the world’s number-one batswoman in one-day internationals. Now her career goal is to win a cricket World Cup. “I wouldn’t want to retire without doing that.”

As for basketball, it’s still on the back burner. This year she played for Otago in the national basketball champs, and was named in the Tall Ferns squad, but made herself unavailable because of cricket commitments.

Just turned 26, Bates is the role model she never had as a girl. As a NZ Olympic Committee ambassador, she teaches school kids about Olympic values. And in April, she was one of four athletes contracted by NZ Cricket to play for the White Ferns and work as regional women’s-cricket coordinators. In Otago, Bates visits schools to teach basic cricket skills, coach players, and show girls cricket isn’t just for boys. “I used to only focus on results, but now I’m focusing on the future of cricket too. I love having an impact on the girls that come after me.” □

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