

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

June 15, 2017

Dear Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to send my warmest greetings to all those gathered in New York tonight for the National Eating Disorders Association's 2017 Annual Gala. While I regret that I am unable to be with you for this special evening, I am honored and humbled to receive your Lifetime Achievement Award, and truly grateful to my friend, Joslyn Smith, for accepting it on my behalf.

Joslyn and I first became pen pals while I was serving as First Lady of Arkansas and she was just an eleven-year-old girl living in the small town of Evening Shade. I was impressed then by her ambition and desire to help others, and was delighted to keep up with her over the years as she graduated from the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, attended Scripps College, and got involved in eating disorders advocacy. I was privileged to stand beside Joslyn on Capitol Hill when she publicly unmasked her eating disorder for the first time, and thrilled when she came to work as an intern in my Senate office for eight months. I have watched her turn the pain and difficulty of her own personal experience into a commitment to work in the field and help people who face similar struggles. First at the American Psychological Association and now at the Binge Eating Disorder Association, she's done just that. I told her that day on Capitol Hill, as I had many times over the years, that I was proud of her. And I remain just as proud and grateful today for her friendship and for her leadership.

The theme of tonight's event could not be more important, relevant, and urgent for breaking down the stigma and stereotypes that surround eating disorders. After all, everyone knows someone with an eating disorder. I have known friends and colleagues, like Joslyn, who have bravely come forward to unmask their struggle, seek help, and help others. I have also tragically learned about those we have lost to eating disorders, promising lives cut short because prevention and treatment were out of reach, or stigma brought shame or paralysis. I was thankful for the opportunity to be the first United States Senator to introduce legislation addressing eating disorders, and am grateful for the advocates and public servants who have continued carrying the torch of this important work forward, so that, together, we can change attitudes and save lives.

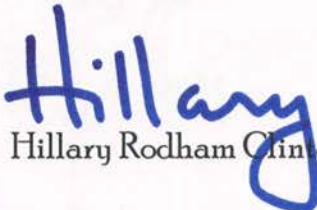
As you mark this evening and look to the mission ahead, please know that I am cheering you on. Addressing and combatting eating disorders is a serious public health issue that requires our attention, dedication, and resolve. Over twenty years ago, I wrote a

book called *It Takes A Village* that talks about the shared responsibility that society has for successfully raising children. That responsibility extends to us all and to each other, at every stage of life, and in all the challenges we may face. Understanding that eating disorders are serious illnesses that touch people from all walks of life is a vital first step for taking action. By sharing personal stories, the men and women who experience these challenges are raising awareness, inspiring strength and courage in others, and helping the broader village ensure that all people have the opportunity to fulfill their God-given potential.

Thank you, once again, for this tremendous honor, and please know that I accept it with gratitude for everything that the National Eating Disorders Association is doing to make a difference and envision a world without eating disorders.

With best wishes and warm regards, I am

Sincerely yours,


Hillary Rodham Clinton