ROOTS of PEACE

HEIDI KÜHN
CEO AND FOUNDER – ROOTS OF PEACE

BIOGRAPHY

Heidi Kühn is the Founder and CEO of Roots of Peace. She founded the humanitarian non-profit organization with a vision of turning Mines to Vines. After winning her own battle with cancer, Kühn was inspired to remove an insidious 'cancer of the earth'—replacing remnants of war with bountiful farmland worldwide. Since 1997, her farmer-focused development model that restores farmland, food security, livelihoods and resilience after devastating conflicts has transformed war-torn lands worldwide. For more than a decade, she has shown millions of people living in war-torn regions around the world a way forward for restoring peace and prosperity through agriculture.

Kühn has grown her business model for peace across the world with the support of governments, international organizations, and the private sector. To date, the work of Roots of Peace has impacted over one million farmers and members of farming families, spanning ten countries: Afghanistan, Angola. Azerbaijan. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Guatemala, Iraq, Israel, Palestine and Vietnam. It has facilitated the removal of unexploded bombs and landmines and restored the land to agricultural use with the planting of millions of vines and fruit trees.

In acknowledgment of her lifetime achievements, Kühn has received multiple awards including the University of California at Berkeley Alumni of the Year Award 2002 for Excellence in Achievement. In 2003 she was inducted into the Marin County Women's Hall of Fame. In 2005 she was awarded the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations Peace & Security Award. In 2006 she received the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. In 2007, she was bestowed the Jefferson Award and the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Public Service– the foremost award for American changemakers. In 2019, Heidi was the first American woman to win the Mahatma Gandhi Global Family Seva Medal in India. She is the proud recipient of the International Women's Forum (IWF) Making a Difference Award and was honored as one of IWF's "Ideas Remaking the World" honorees in 2020. In 2021, Heidi's visionary leadership was acknowledged with her inclusion in the inaugural Forbes 50 Over 50 "Women Who Are Leading the Way in Impact" List. In November 2022, Heidi was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the American University of Afghanistan at a dinner hosted by former First Ladies Laura Bush and Hillary Clinton. In 2023, Heidi was appointed to the Advisory Council of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage. Heidi is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in Political Economics. She has pursued a lifetime seeking peaceful solutions across all borders as is a former CNN reporter and producer through her own company NewsLink International, which covered breaking news stories of U.S./Soviet Relations during the late 1980's during the time of perestroika and glasnost. She lives in San Rafael, California, with her husband, Gary, with whom she has four children—Brooks, Tucker, Kyleigh, and Christian. She also has six grandchildren.

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