



2024 Annual Report

February 2024

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Message from the Board

Dear Friends & Supporters,

We are thrilled to share **BHeart's** activities and programs, which would not have been possible without your support. Your generosity proved that you appreciate the work of **BHeart** and its support to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH).

- Throughout 2024, **BHeart** hosted and attended **meetings and events to promote engagement of B-H diaspora and** prominent persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **BHeart** supported the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in organizing a celebration of the 32nd independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina in March.
- **BHeart** honored Ajna Jusić, a recipient of **International Women of Courage Award**.
- In April, **BHeart raised** over **\$5,500** during the **World Autism Awareness Month** for the Colibri School for autistic children in Sarajevo.
- In June, **BHeart** partnered up with the **Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina** in Washington, D.C. and organized a literary **evening with Senka Marić**, an acclaimed B-H author.
- **BHeart** partnered up with the D.C. **Diplomatic Perspective** and organized a **Summer Travel Study Visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina** for the Program participants and Diplomatic Perspective Board Members.
- The **BHeart School of Language and Cultural Heritage** has been providing fully-virtual language classes to students of all ages for nine years.

We look forward to your continued support in 2025!

BHeart Board of Directors

BHeart Activities in 2024 (1/6)

Celebration of 32nd Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina

On March 1, 2024, **BHeart** had a pleasure of supporting and attending the Independence Day reception at the **Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina** in Washington, D.C.

This was the first time in five years that the Embassy hosted a reception to mark this important holiday. The reception was attended by the US officials, diplomatic core, and the Bosnian diaspora. This was a great opportunity to discuss future engagements and promotion of BiH in the US, while strengthening the ties between the two countries. **James O'Brien**, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Euroasia, in his remarks confirmed the US support for BiH and said: "...what I can say is that now, in 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina still exists! It is how it is going to be. We are now facing internal challenges, but, at the same time, there is an opportunity because EU is ready to consider Bosnia and Herzegovina's candidate status."

At the end of his remarks, **Ambassador Sven Alkalaj** thanked the sponsors of the event and said that the future lied in peace and integrations and belonged to those who loved their country and wanted their children to live and prosper in a stable, free, and safe country.

Links:

Glas Amerike: [Washington: U Ambasadi BiH obilježen Dan nezavisnosti](#)

Federalna.ba: [U Ambasadi u Washingtonu svečani prijem povodom Dana nezavisnosti Bosne i Hercegovine](#)

Patria: O'Brien: [Zapanjujući osjećaj otpora i posvećenost branilaca BiH predstavljali su inspiraciju za sve strance](#)

BHeart Activities in 2024 (2/6)

BHeart honoring Ajna Jusić for her outstanding accomplishments

BHeart had a pleasure of meeting **Ajna Jusić**, following the **International Women of Courage Award** ceremony at the White House on March 4, 2024. Secretary of State **Antony J. Blinken** and First Lady **Jill Biden** hosted the annual **International Women of Courage (IWOC) Awards** ceremony at the White House.

Since the inception, IWOC Award recognized more than 190 women from 90 countries who have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equity and equality, and the empowerment of women and girls, in all their diversity, and more, often at great personal risk and sacrifice.

Ajna Jusić, a psychologist and a feminist was born in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2018, she founded the **Forgotten Children of War Association**, the first organization in the Western Balkans to advocate for the social and legal visibility of children born of rape during war and against the associated social stigma. Following years of effort, in 2023, Ms. Jusić and her organization advocated successfully for the passage of the first such law in the world, which grants special rights to children born through acts of wartime sexual violence. This law will help provide compensation to these marginalized individuals – who are now young adults – by providing increased social protection and countering years of stigmatization. Having started the vital conversation to help children born of rape to slowly emerge from the shadows, Ms. Jusić and her organization have also assisted victims of other conflicts, including Rwanda and Ukraine, to address social stigma and to fight for equality.

Link: [2024 International Women of Courage Award](#)



Image: BHeart Board Members with Ajna Jusić, Washington, D.C.

BHeart Activities in 2024 (3/6)

BHeart raises over \$5,500 during the World Autism Awareness Month for the Sarajevo Association Colibri

BHeart raised funds to help [Colibri](#) Association of families with children and individuals with developmental challenges in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Colibri provides free education, therapeutic services, and support to children with developmental challenges and their families. In addition, Colibri advocates for autism awareness, acceptance, and the rights of people on the spectrum.

Over the years, hundreds of young students received free education, therapeutic services and after-school care at Colibri School, and shared pride and joy of their achievements with their friends, families, and caretakers. Colibri organizes events like live concerts and workshops, which showcase children's academic successes, and motivate them to pursue their passions for writing, drawing and photography.

BHeart uses this opportunity to once again thank its friends and donors for their generous support.



Images: Colibri school activities, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

BHeart Activities in 2024 (4/6)

Soiree with acclaimed author Senka Maric at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington, D.C.

On June 8, 2024, **BHeart** hosted a soiree with the Bosnian author Senka Maric at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Maric promoted her latest book “Body Kintsugi”, an autobiographical novel about Ms. Maric’s experience with breast cancer. She talked about her life in Mostar, where she gets her inspiration from, her literary achievements, and future projects.

Link: Radio Sarajevo: [Senka Marić i BHeart Fondacija: Književnost i Hercegovina u Ambasadi BiH u Washingtonu](#)

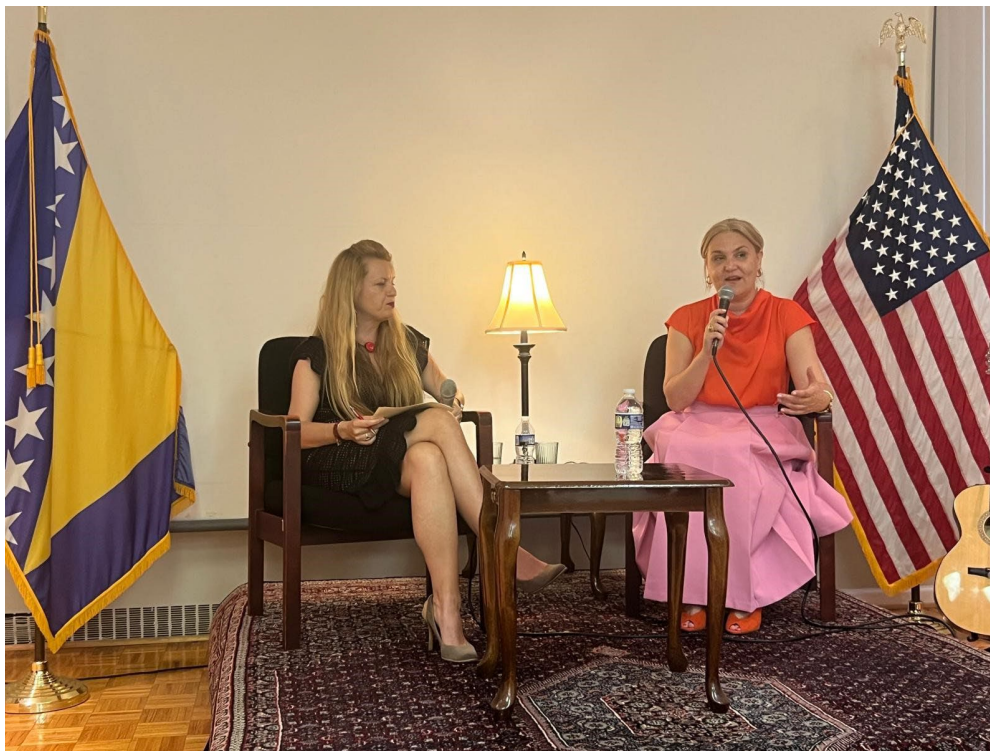


Image: Senka Marić and Ajla Terzić at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Washington, D.C.

BHeart Activities in 2024 (5/6)

Summer Travel Study Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In August, **BHeart**, in partnership with Sarajevo-based Green Visions, hosted the [Diplomatic Perspective](#) Board Members and the Second Cohort participants in Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Diplomatic Perspective** is a DC based NGO working to empower Black students with their first US passport, fostering global exploration and shaping the future's diverse diplomatic leaders.

The summer program was customized to fit the needs of the Diplomatic Perspective and provided an immersive experience for the participants of the Second Cohort by combining eco-tourism, guest lectures, volunteering, workshops, adventure, and fun activities.

If you'd like to learn more about and discuss options for a customizable program, please contact us directly at bheartdc@gmail.com.



Image: Second Cohort participants attending a meeting in Sarajevo.

Internship @BHeart

BHeart offers internship opportunity to students and young professionals eager to learn more about the non-profit space. During internship, the interns will have an opportunity to further develop **BHeart's** global outreach strategy and to promote the summer program. They will also have an opportunity to meet and engage with other non-profit leaders working in BIH. **If you'd like to intern with BHeart in 2025**, please contact us directly at bheartdc@gmail.com.

BHeart Activities in 2024 (6/6)

BHeart School of Language and Cultural Heritage

We are proud to share that the **BHeart** School continued operations for its 9th consecutive year, offering a fully-virtual curriculum to students from across the world. Throughout the year, our school included students from across the United States, including California, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Additionally, we continued our now four-year partnership with *Creativus* from Sarajevo.

Radio Sarajevo: [Jačanje bosanskog identiteta: Najmlađa dijaspora se druži sa vršnjacima u domovini](#)



Images: BHeart School Students participate in activities and games with their peers from Creativus school in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

About the BHeart Foundation

Our Mission

The **BHeart** Foundation is a volunteer organization that focuses on issues and supports projects that are important to Bosnian women and their families.

BHeart garners the talents, experiences, and abilities of Bosnians and Herzegovinians and their friends living outside Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH). Working in partnership with people in the country, we aim to

- Foster educational, social, cultural, environmental and other positive changes
- Help disadvantaged segments of the Bosnian society
- Support projects that help create a progressive and forward-looking BIH
- Preserve connections with BIH: sustain heritage, culture, and the identity of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in the diaspora
- Promote BIH in the US
- Encourage the Bosnian diaspora youth to reconnect with BIH

Who We Are

We are a group of volunteers originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina who share a tremendous love for our country and an extraordinary motivation to contribute to humanitarian and other activities that will move it forward and reach its potential.

BHeart's Board Members are the organization's principal volunteers:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Nevena Bosnić | • Dženita Mehić Saračević |
| • Lejla Čelebić Jusufbegović | • Mirna Mekić |
| • Sabina Đutović-Alivodić | • Gorana Šimunović |
| • Adelhaida Hatibović | • Nešković |

Get Involved or Donate

We would like to inspire friends of BIH to join our **BHeart** community and share their time and talents as volunteers and supporters. We are always looking for new ways to support our mission, so if you have a great idea for a project that you would like to share with us, please let us know by contacting us at bheartdc@gmail.com.

You can make a difference! Your contributions will help change lives and give momentum for a better future in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [Donate here](#).

Visit us at our website or social media channels!

