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**Charitable Donations to Private Organizations in Haiti
Critical Component to Ongoing Food Crisis Relief Efforts**

*Nuestrros Pequeños Hermanos supports thousands in need
and serves important role in community*

Arlington Heights, Ill.—June 9, 2008—Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, is no stranger to worldwide media attention as the country’s agonizing food crisis continues to escalate. Violent riots and protests, the April ousting of Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis and renewed pledges of aid during the early June U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Summit are well covered and debated, and headlines and photos provide a glimpse of the upheaval.

Story upon story relays the desperation of the situation, but for people like Fr. Rick Frechette, physician and Nuestrros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for “Our Little Brothers and Sisters) Haiti National Director, that desperation compels him even further to do all he can to help the thousands of children the organization serves in the region. For Frechette, turning his back is not an option, and since he arrived in Haiti 21 years ago to serve those in need, he knows how critical NPH’s support is.

NPH, an organization founded in 1954 by Fr. William Wasson, operates homes for orphaned, abandoned and disadvantaged children in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries. Haiti’s NPH home, St. Helene, opened in 1988 about 25 miles outside the capital of Port Au Prince. The 750 children who live there permanently or receive support from NPH are able to go to school, live in a safe environment and thrive despite the country’s circumstances.

In a country of nearly nine million people, “Fr. Rick,” as he is known, explained, “The problem is that most of them live on \$500 per year and food is three times more expensive than it was a year ago. For many, it’s nearly impossible to survive.”

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The price of the most basic staples, beans and rice, has risen dramatically with a 110 lb. bag of beans increasing 42.5 percent, and the same quantity of rice an astounding 82 percent in less than one year. In some homes, milk has doubled.

For Fr. Rick, reality means seeing funerals of more than 300 children per month, many of whom die from preventable things like hunger, dehydration or pneumonia. “It’s really a pathetic situation and half of the children dying are under five years old. They have to have access to care and it’s tragic when there’s a gap between that care and available money,” he said.

Because of extreme unrest in the government, the best giving strategy, Fr. Rick advises, is for donors to funnel money directly to non-profit organizations with a good track record of helping those in need. He said that in this time of chaos, aid distribution must be carefully controlled. “We really need to focus on getting aid to those who are most hungry and weak, pregnant women and those who can’t fight on the food chain.”

He continued, “It used to be that you could assemble a large number together to distribute aid, but given today’s environment, it’s now impossible because in people’s desperation, we’d wind up with an uncontrollable situation. We have to manage the distribution much more discreetly.”

Fr. Rick knows the challenges NPH and other organizations face in Haiti, but his philosophy is pragmatic when it comes to helping those in need and his faith has always carried him through. “Some people might look at it as a challenge to address a problem that has no immediate solution, but the most important thing we can do is keep working at it. With our help, these kids can go on to have brighter futures.”

NPH does not act alone in its efforts to help children most in need. Sharon Saxelby, president of Friends of the Orphans, the non-profit “face” of NPH in the U.S., said, “We work in solidarity with Fr. Rick and all nine of our Country Directors to raise funds here in the U.S. to support the wonderful work of NPH in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Friends of the Orphans, a 50-year-old non-profit organization, provides a tax-deductible avenue for U.S. donors to support NPH, and is well aware of the ongoing challenges. “All nine of our homes are suffering from enormous increases in the cost of food and fuel and it is a crisis to which we have to devote our full attention,” Saxelby said.

Throughout his decades of work on behalf of the children, Fr. Rick had a dream of expanding Haiti’s NPH presence. That dream materialized when a state-of-the-art pediatric hospital, St. Damien Chateaublond, opened in 2006 in Tabarre. The facility, which includes a neighboring dental clinic, laboratory and public health clinic, provides in-patient and outpatient care to more than 40,000 children and adults annually.

“We see a lot more malnourished children coming to the hospital, more desperate people coming to the gate, and the unrest and riots are putting us well beyond our budgets for the

kids in our care,” said Fr. Rick, who was primarily responsible for the grand vision and reality of the hospital. “But we must never turn our backs to those most in need.”

And Fr. Rick explained that while the mission of NPH Haiti is to provide support and assistance specifically to the children in the home and support programs, and those who visit the hospital, the organization regularly reaches out to all residents.

“We’re trying to help neighbors in three ways,” he said. “We help the 400 people who work with us, 4,000 kids in the 16 street schools who need a meal a day and local kitchens that serve thousands of meals to senior citizens.”

“Investing in humanity is different than investing in a project, but obviously, you still have to invest with the intent to solve it,” Fr. Rick said. “There’s sometimes a lack of solidarity among people, but every little bit counts, and every ounce of support we receive gets us one step closer. The children deserve all that we can do.”

For more information on ways to support NPH in Haiti or any of the nine countries NPH supports, or to donate or sponsor a child in need, visit www.friendsoftheorphans.org or call 866-690-1703.

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