



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blair Ciecko
Celtic Marketing
708-655-2045
blairc@celticchicago.com

Marlene Byrne
Celtic Marketing
847-647-7500
marleneb@celticchicago.com

Friends of the Orphans and Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos Outline Additional Details for Addressing Haitian Orphans

*Organizations also continue extensive Haitian outreach and
report on conditions as aid continues to reach St. Damien Hospital*

CHICAGO— January 25, 2010— In the days following the Jan. 12 Haitian earthquake, U.S.-based Friends of the Orphans and the organization it supports, Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos International (NPH), announced they were in the initial stages of a program to address the needs of thousands of children orphaned by the disaster. As they begin to implement the plan, they have added a community outreach component to aid the thousands displaced to temporary tent cities.

“After ensuring the hundreds of children already in NPH’s care were safe, and meeting the immediate needs of treating hundreds of injured patients, we have begun focusing on the growing population of newly orphaned children and the people displaced in the tent cities,” said NPH Information Officer Monica Gery.

The United Nations estimates that there are 600 tent cities, with anywhere from 1,000 to tens of thousands of people living there. According to Gery, because these cities offer no sanitation, food, water or medical care, NPH’s goal is to reach these communities through dispatching medical brigades, food stations and implementing a program that gives children accessibility to a clean environment, food, water and activities.

The NPH team will begin working within communities and parks where they already have established contacts through the St. Luke Outreach Program, created in 1999 by NPH Haiti National Director and physician Fr. Rick Frechette to help Haiti’s most vulnerable children living in slums and on the streets.

With the help of the St. Luke staff and ex-*pequeños* who grew up in NPH’s St. Helene orphanage in Kenscoff, NPH will identify those children most at risk who have lost their

homes in the earthquake. They will be brought to NPH's day camp to receive medical attention, food, water and activities, and returned to their families at night.

For those children with no families, NPH will begin an intake process to determine which might have already been in the process of being adopted before the earthquake. Those children who are newly orphaned or abandoned and not awaiting the completion of adoption will be integrated into NPH's St. Helene orphanage. It currently raises 350 children and supports another 240 off-site.

NPH's model for raising children is very unique. Like all of the NPH homes in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries, St. Helene is a permanent home for orphaned, abandoned and disadvantaged children, and they are not placed for adoption. Instead, they are welcomed with their brothers and sisters and become a part of the stable and secure NPH family. While being raised in the home, they focus on education and personal growth, knowing that a loving support system will always be in place for them. This enables them to grow into caring and productive members of their communities.

Gery said, "Obviously, it will be a long, arduous process identifying those children most in need, but NPH and Friends of the Orphans are committed to using our resources to help as many as we can. We encourage those who are able to donate to consider doing so, as we expect that the number of children and their needs will be very extensive."

At St. Helene, all staff have returned to work and a truckload of food recently donated by the World Food Program is expected to last approximately four weeks. Gery reports that UNICEF has also donated a steady milk supply for the children in NPH's St. Damien Hospital in Tabarre.

St. Damien Hospital, the only free pediatric hospital in Haiti, sustained structural damage in the first earthquake and is one of 18 hospitals treating patients, both children and adults. Gery said the number of daily cases is slowly decreasing and the team of 60 volunteer doctors, nurses and paramedics are working 24-hour shifts on surgeries.

"Conditions continue to improve and our inspiring medical team in the first few days were attending to 500 patients, which is now down to 140, two-thirds of whom are children. We are always evaluating the most critical injuries, and with help from supporters like Sen. John Edwards and Paul Haggis, have arranged transportation for many to better equipped trauma centers for spinal and head injuries," said Gery.

She finished, "We have also received much needed medical supplies sponsored by a TV audience in Germany, actor Sean Penn visited and donated crutches, and the American Academy of Pediatrics sent medicine along with casting materials. We are grateful to all for their contributions."

All donations made to Friends of the Orphans will be directly applied to immediate needs such as first aid supplies and medicine, food and water, shipping of necessary materials to

assist in efforts, treating the injured and the establishment of programs to help the most vulnerable.

Please visit www.friendsoftheorphans.org, or call 888-201-8880 to make a donation in response to this tragedy.

BACKGROUND:

Chicago-based Friends of the Orphans, a U.S. fundraising arm, and Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos International (NPH) transform the lives of orphaned, abandoned and disadvantaged children in Latin American and the Caribbean, including Haiti. Our presence in Haiti includes our orphanage with 350 children, various community and education programs and the establishment of the country's only free pediatric hospital. NPH's hospital programs also help adults in need and last year, staff and volunteers treated more than 30,000 children and adults.

Friends of the Orphans, a 40-year-old nonprofit, has six regional offices in the United States that support a network of NPH homes and their outreach programs in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries. Since its founding in 1954, NPH has assisted nearly 16,000 children and currently cares for more than 3,300 in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. For more information about Friends of the Orphans, please visit www.friendsoftheorphans.org.

###