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Media Contact: Andrea Burnett
Andrea Burnett PR
650.207.0917
Email: andrea@andreaburnett.com

LESBIAN AND GAY HAITI FUND TOPS THE LIST OF DONORS TO AMERICAN RED CROSS

SAN FRANCISCO (January 27, 2010): Within days of the creation of the **American Red Cross LGBT Haiti Relief Fund**, a Red Cross representative stated the fund has already raised more money than many of the huge corporate donors. This was accomplished by significant outreach efforts to the LGBT community via donors and activists along with a massive email campaign to the members of three LGBT cruise companies, Olivia, Atlantis and RSVP. Within a week, the community has raised over \$150,000 for the fund.

Donations of cruises, an upgrade auction and matching funds all were contributed by the cruise companies as pledges came pouring in with record dollars in a matter of a few hours. "We are reaching out to all LGBT organizations and individuals to become part of this relief fund effort and get the word out everywhere", said Judy Dlugacz, President and founder of Olivia Companies, a lesbian-oriented vacation company. "If we all work together we can provide enormous support to the Haiti relief efforts."

"Over the last week we have seen a wonderful broadening of this initiative within our community," stated Claire Lucas, an international development expert and a well known community activist and political fundraiser who worked with the American Red Cross to set up the fund. This effort began with the LGBT cruise companies and has quickly expanded to include other organizations and individuals. "Just this morning, three very diverse LGBT groups approached us to join the initiative; The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission based in New York, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center/Pride Center representing Southern Florida and a donor-directed community fund at the Alaska Community Foundation."

"We are inspired to see so many groups coming together to help earthquake survivors in Haiti," says Nan Buzard, Sr. Director of International Response and Programs for the American Red Cross. "The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender community has done an outstanding job of raising funds to support the American Red Cross's relief work in Haiti."

Cary Alan Johnson, Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, stated, "The LGBT community has a long tradition of mobilizing quickly to respond to crisis. We are proud that so many business leaders in our community have come forward to assist the people of Haiti in this time of great need."

Lucas added, "While we have received over 1,300 donations totaling over \$150,000 as of today, the actual donations have only just begun and we predict there will be a colossal response to this historic endeavor."

Mark Bromley, of The Council for Global Equality, a non-profit organization that encourages a stronger voice on LGBT human rights concerns said, "We are urging all members of the LGBT community and their friends to donate to the American Red Cross LGBT Haiti Relief Fund to help the people of Haiti. Our community sends its deepest compassion and support to the people of Haiti and we will speak as one voice to show that support."

To contribute to the fund, visit: <http://american.redcross.org/LGBT-pub>

For interviews and more information about the American Red Cross LGBT Haiti Relief please contact Andrea Burnett andrea@andreaburnett.com or 650.207.0917.

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