



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Owners of Gay and Lesbian Cruise Companies Raise Money for Earthquake Relief in Haiti**

**Miami, FL– January 14, 2010**–On the eve of the departure this weekend of an LGBT-oriented cruise that has a scheduled stop in Labadee, Haiti, the owners of three of America’s leading LGBT cruise companies along with community activists Claire Lucas and Mark Bromley announced a coordinated fund to raise money for disaster relief in that earthquake-ravaged country. The owners of Atlantis, Olivia and RSVP are all joining forces with others in the community to raise disaster relief from their current and past guests.

Rich Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of Atlantis Events, which has a gay and lesbian cruise departing this Sunday from Miami with a scheduled stop on the northern coast of Haiti, noted that while the area they will visit was not directly damaged by the quake, “our guests have been watching with horror and concern as the painful images of suffering in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince come spilling forth on our televisions.” Emphasizing that “now is the time for us to lend our gay dollars to a compelling human tragedy that knows no gender or sexual orientation,” Campbell vowed to raise awareness and direct funding during the upcoming Atlantis cruise.

Judy Dlugacz, President and founder of Olivia Companies, a lesbian-oriented vacation company, explained that many LGBT Americans have visited Haiti on gay cruise ships and that “so many of our passengers have been touched by the destruction and poverty in the Western Hemisphere’s poorest country. It is important that as LGBT Americans, we come together to show our community’s solidarity and support for those living through this unimaginable disaster.”

Claire Lucas, an international development expert and a well known community activist and political fundraiser, is raising awareness within the community and worked with the American Red Cross to set up a dedicated donation site to collect donations from the LGBT community. She explained that “all of the money collected through this appeal will be managed by the American Red Cross.” The Red Cross will bundle these funds and record them as contributions from the LGBT community in America to the people of Haiti. “The symbolism of a unified, community-based financial response is important,” Lucas emphasized, as it “represents a fitting effort to reach beyond our borders with a message of hope and goodwill from LGBT Americans.”

American Red Cross Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Floyd W. Pitts stated “We are thrilled with this partnership with the LGBT community and we are delighted to be working with organizations which take such a strong interest in humanitarian response”.

In addition to Atlantis and Olivia cruises, Charlie Rounds, President of RSVP cruises (a subsidiary of Atlantis), has also joined the effort. Mark Bromley, Chair of the Council for Global Equality, is also seeking to raise awareness within the LGBT community in response to the disaster. “Too often the LGBT community in the United States is portrayed as inwardly focused and unattached to the larger suffering beyond our borders,” Bromley lamented, “but we know that to be untrue, and as we watch the



devastation in Haiti today, we can also send a message about our community's larger concern for human suffering."

Atlantis/RSVP have pledged \$15,000 in matching contributions, Olivia has pledged an additional \$7,500 for a total of \$22,500. Olivia is also offering a limited number of free cruises to those who contribute \$7,500 or more. They are urging all LGBT individuals and organizations to contribute and provide matching funds when possible. To contribute to the fund, visit: <http://american.redcross.org/LGBT-pub>