

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 13, 2010

Contact: Susan Soonkeum Cox 541-687-2202 or 541-521-3036

ssoonkeum@aol.com

<http://www.holtinternational.org/haiti/earthquake.shtml>

Holt International Responds to Crisis in Haiti Following Devastating Earthquake.

[EUGENE, OR]

Following reports of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, Holt International staff immediately began attempts to contact Holt staff in Haiti at Holt Fontana Village, a child care center and compound approximately 40 miles north of Port-au-Prince. Within a few hours internet communication confirmed that the child care center, the children and staff there were safe and the facility undamaged.

“We are profoundly grateful that the children and staff in our center are safe” said Kim Brown, Holt President and CEO. “We still do not have an assessment of the 120 families in our Family Preservation program and we are doing all we can to determine their safety.”

The 40 mile distance from the heart of the devastation provided protection to Holt’s child care center. However, the staff and others associated with the program have not been as fortunate. The child-care workers who live at the center have their own families and homes in Port-au-Prince. Early this morning Holt was informed that at least 3 family members of staff died in the earthquake. Further casualties are feared to become known in the hours and days ahead.

Holt’s program in Haiti was established in 2004. In addition to the child care center and the Family Preservation program, there are 21 children in the process of being adopted by families in the U.S. According to CEO Kim Brown, “This is a very stressful time for the adoptive families waiting to adopt from Haiti. There is great relief that the children are safe, but the desire to get them home and safe as quickly as possible is overwhelming.”

This week Holt Fontana Village was hosting a group of 6 volunteers from the U.S. were visiting Holt’s programs. They had just driven into the hotel complex when the earthquake hit. Originally plans were for the group to return to the U.S. tomorrow but the uncertainty of the conditions in Haiti make their plans uncertain.

Holt Country Director, Mansour Masse feels the burden of responsibility for the children in the center, the waiting adoptive families, and the grief and loss of the devastation to his country. Says Kim Brown, “We are doing all we can to support what we know will be very difficult and critical times for Haiti in the weeks and months ahead. We are committed to the children in that country and will do all we can to expand our services and support to meet the needs of children and families.”

Learn more about Holt’s program in Haiti and how you can help at

<http://www.holtinternational.org/haiti/earthquake.shtml>