



MEDIA RELEASE

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CBC CELEBRITY LENDS A HELPING HAND TO LOCAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY

PETERBOROUGH – Canadian actress Jessica Holmes is working with local charity Friends of Honduran Children on a new DVD promoting the work of the organization, Board Chair Dr. Jim McCallum announced today.

Actress Jessica Holmes, one of the stars of CBC-TV's Royal Canadian Air Farce, has been lending her support to Peterborough's own homegrown children's charity, Friends of Honduran Children (FoHC). Traveling with husband and actor Scott Yaphe, Dr. McCallum, and a group of FoHC volunteers earlier this summer, Holmes spent four days touring the terribly poor regions of the poverty-stricken nation while being filmed for a documentary-style DVD slated for public launch later this year promoting the work of the organization.

Holmes, who has a deep love for Latin America, speaks fluent Spanish and says she comes from a long line of "blue collar philanthropists" eager to make a real difference, was a natural fit as an advocate for the organization. "Jessica shares not only our concern for the many thousands of impoverished, orphaned or abandoned children struggling for survival in Honduras," said McCallum. "She also shares our dedication to improving quality of life for impoverished Honduran children and their families. We're thrilled to have her working with us on this project."

While filming the DVD with local filmmakers Eric Harris and Brenda Beck, Holmes and her fellow volunteers witnessed firsthand some of the horrors FoHC works to eradicate such as children living and eating in garbage dumps, toddlers incarcerated with their mothers, and the extreme poverty that is prevalent throughout the countryside.

"Visiting sites like the Tegucigalpa dump where many children eat, sleep and work was a shocking experience," says Holmes. "I was suddenly struck by the knowledge that this was it for them – they'd never play in a park, go to school, or have any kind of a normal childhood. They'll likely never live anywhere but this dump."

(more)

The group's travels in Honduras also included some happy experiences, however, including a visit to Pedro Atala, one of the orphanages supported by FoHC. There Jessica and the rest of the group were able to witness orphaned or abandoned children being welcomed to their new home, a place where they receive food, shelter, medical care, an education, and the reassurance of a constant and loving environment. "From a block away we could hear children laughing and playing," said Holmes. "When we walked through the gates, we were rushed by about 30 children, smiling and excited to show us around their home. They were just so proud."

Friends of Honduran Children is a non-profit, volunteer-driven and grass roots organization based in Peterborough. Working with Honduran partner Sociedad Amigos de los Niños, FoHC provides the necessary aid, supplies and skills to help the impoverished children of Honduras to break the cycle of poverty which controls their lives and become independent, self-reliant, contributing adults.

Using a broad approach to solve the problem one Honduran child at a time, FoHC builds sustainable programs like their well known Medical Brigades, rather than quick-fix band-aid solutions. Thanks to the assistance of the Sophia Hilton Foundation, the new awareness raising DVD is currently in production with a public launch planned for later this year. For more information on the Friends of Honduran Children, visit www.honduranchildren.com.

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Professional quality images of Jessica's trip to Honduras are available upon request.