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New PSA Campaign Captures Spirit of Volunteering on Vacation **“Travel with Spirit” PSAs Highlight Fundamentals of “VolunTourism;”** **Vacations that Mix Volunteering and Leisure Travel Attract All Age Groups**

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. (Feb. 27, 2012) – “Travel with Spirit” public service announcements hit the airwaves today to highlight and advocate “voluntourism.”

In a 2008 survey by msnbc.com and “Condé Nast Traveler,” more than half of the respondents expressed an interest in taking a volunteer vacation. Matching the needs of local communities and non-profits with the desire of many travelers to volunteer – and providing meaningful ways to engage within the limited vacation times of many Americans – is a challenge that non-profits and travel providers across the board are working to meet.

“These PSAs are our way of sowing more seeds. We’ve seen firsthand what an impact voluntourism has on the traveler as well as the recipient,” said Honnie Korngold, host of the “Travel with Spirit” syndicated television program and principal of PhilanthroFilms, which helped to produce the PSAs. “We want to spark curiosity and help people understand that it is within their reach to volunteer on vacation, even if just for an hour or two.”

The PSAs are a collaborative effort by PhilanthroFilms, Brandon Crouch Ministries and the Jordan Tourism Board. All three organizations donated time and resources to help **spread the word and encourage vacation-goers – especially those who do not have the time for extended volunteer or mission trips – to consider volunteering on vacation.**

The PSA spots are available for unlimited use by radio and television outlets. **The 30-second video spot and 15-second, 30-second and one-minute radio spots are all available for free download at www.travelwithspirit.com/voluntourism.** The website also provides links to non-profits and organizations involved in volunteer vacations or voluntourism. **The spots received positive feedback during the recent National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention and will air on Christian and secular networks.** Music for the spots -- “Heaven Meets Earth” -- was provided by The Christopher Hopper Band.

The PSA video highlights Brandon Crouch’s voluntourism experience at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in the ancient city of Salt, Jordan. In 2011, Crouch – a Christian pastor, church planter and television host – joined a small group from North America to volunteer in the institute’s job training center. He teamed up with one of the students to make handwoven crafts and then shared a meal in the school cafeteria. He said the experience was unforgettable.

“I had one of the best times in Jordan traveling and volunteering with my soon-to-be wife,” said Crouch. “We are always looking for great opportunities to model who Jesus is, and this was exactly it. We had the delight of being the hands and feet of Jesus while on vacation!”

Jordanian officials have shown leadership in the voluntourism movement, and helped Crouch’s group connect with the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf and students without upsetting their daily routine.

“While some organizations and activities are not suited for drop-in visitors, others welcome them with open arms,” said Malia Asfour, director of the Jordan Tourism Board, North America. “It all depends on the needs of the local community or organization. Many student centers or summer camps welcome volunteers who will lend a few hours to help students with English conversational skills or read a story in English. Others may need basic help like painting a school or preparing lunches. Many parks have programs for volunteers to help plant trees or clean up litter. The list keeps growing.”

A passionate advocate for voluntourism, Asfour sees it as a natural option for any type of tour – domestic or international. Asfour, who is on the advisory board of the Seattle-based Adventure Travel Trade Association and the Faith-Based Tourism Advisory Council of NTA (formerly the National Tour Association), is a leading travel industry advocate of voluntourism.

“We are trying to help people connect the dots,” said Asfour. “It’s a delicate balance of helping non-profits benefit from volunteer goodwill and helping travelers make a meaningful connection. It can be a win-win if handled carefully. Even for those who have only a few hours to give on vacation, there is a lot to be said for short one-on-one inter-cultural exchanges.”

Korngold is encouraged by the growing number of families getting involved in voluntourism. “Traditionally, college students and retirees were seen as the volunteer vacationers, but more and more mid-career people and families are getting involved, and many families are making it an annual experience,” said Korngold. “It’s exciting to think of these young people and their parents volunteering and learning about other cultures at a micro-level as they travel the worldtogether.”

Voluntourism ranges from extended trips with volunteer activities spanning several weeks or months to shorter trips that include a day or hours of volunteering. Traditional volunteer vacations (or full-fledged mission trips) did not necessarily include leisure travel, while the growing trend in “voluntourism” is to mix leisure travel with volunteer activities. To learn more, check out the voluntourism links provided at www.travelwithspirit.com/voluntourism.

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PhilanthroFilms is a California-based production company specializing in broadcast, with an emphasis on stories of inspiration and hope.

“Travel with Spirit” is a half-hour television program that features destinations that appeal to Christian travelers seeking spiritual enrichment as a part of their travel experience. The show airs on several networks, including Catholic TV, Sky Angel's Angel Two, Legacy TV and American Family Association's Homeschool Channel.

The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan was established in 1964 as a school for deaf children. Since that time, it has offered Rehabilitation, Education, Vocational Training and other Services for deaf and physically or mentally challenged people from throughout Jordan and the region.

The PSA music is “Heaven Meets Earth” by The Christopher Hopper Band. (www.christopherhopper.com)