

WHITE HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL IN FINAL REPORT ON FAITH BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (January 13, 2009) – In a new report issued this week, *Innovations in Compassion: A Final Report to the Armies of Compassion*, Virginia Beach-based organization Operation Blessing International (OBI) is highlighted by President Bush and the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) for its domestic and international disaster relief and recovery operations.

The report provides a summary of the 8-year-old Faith-Based and Community Initiative and how the program has "brought life changing aid to millions in need." A section of the report, "Natural Disasters: Effective Disaster Preparation, Response and Recovery," describes how, in such disasters, "faith-based community organizations play a vital role in volunteer and community organizing, fund-raising and other operations that build the foundation for community revitalization."

OBI is featured in a highlighted section describing how the FBCI helped the charity partner with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster relief work following the Tennessee tornadoes in 2008, as well as a photo of an OBI volunteer in action. The highlighted section includes a quote from Jody Herrington, director of US disaster relief, stating, "In the aftermath of the recent hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters, FEMA has been very supportive in helping Operation Blessing International connect with officials on Federal, State and local levels to begin providing disaster relief efforts within hours of the devastation."

To date, OBI has partnered with the federal agency for relief following Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the Tennessee tornadoes, and last year's Hurricane Ike in Texas.

OBI was also asked to participate in Department of Homeland Security Regional Partnership Trainings, hosted by the DHS FBCI Center in collaboration with local emergency management agencies. The purpose of these events was to educate communities on disaster preparedness and what organizations like OBI have to offer. Jody Herrington spoke at two of these events.

Bill Horan, president of OBI, said, "When disasters strike, victims need help and they need it quickly. Government always tries to help, but immediate action is often slowed by a headwind of bureaucracy and political bickering. Officials from FBCI have helped build a bridge over these traditional obstacles and expedited cooperative efforts between fast-moving organizations like Operation Blessing International and government agencies. The result is faster and more efficient delivery of resources and relief to disaster victims. We are honored to be featured in the White House report and thank the FBCI for their efforts."

ABOUT OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL:

Operation Blessing International (OBI) is one of the largest charities in America, providing strategic disaster relief, medical aid, hunger relief, clean water and community development in 22 countries around the world on a daily basis. In 2008, OBI responded to 33 disasters in 16 foreign countries as well as 7 major domestic disasters. Most recently, OBI mobilized teams and funded major relief and recovery efforts in Myanmar, the Sichuan Province of China, Rift Valley in Kenya, Bangladesh, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, the Darfur region of Sudan, Pakistan, Somalia, India, Indonesia, Mozambique and the Philippines. OBI has also made headlines as a first responder to U.S. hurricanes, floods and tornados as well as the tsunami disaster in Indonesia, Sri

Lanka, India and Thailand. In addition to directing major disaster relief efforts, OBI has often filled the role of logistical arm to organizations including the International Red Cross, the Salvation Army, UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Program. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 202.7 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$1.4 billion to date.

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Contact:

Chris Roslan

DRC Inc. Public Relations

(212) 966-4600

chris@drcpublicrelations.com