

For Immediate Release!

OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL'S ANNUAL ANTI-PARASITE PROGRAM TO KICK OFF IN MEXICO JUNE 13-19

Tens Of Millions Of People In Latin America, And Now Africa, To Be Cured Through OBI's Program Combining Free Medication With Hands-On Preventative Training

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (June 11, 2009) – The humanitarian organization Operation Blessing International (OBI) will kick off its annual anti-parasite program this year on June 13-19 in Mexico. The global program, which has recently focused on Latin America, has been expanded to include the Ivory Coast in Africa and will help tens of millions of people this year through free medication and hands-on preventative training. OBI president Bill Horan made these announcements today.

Intestinal worms pose serious health problems and are one of the top ten causes of death in children under five. According to the ministries of health in Latin America, it is estimated that 73.4 million school-aged children in the countries that OBI is working in are infected. Lack of proper hygiene makes the population susceptible to infestation, which can also occur through walking barefoot in infested soil, eating unwashed food, and exposure to animal and human waste.

The OBI program will commence June 13-19 in Mexico, where OBI is working in conjunction with the Mexican Ministry of Health to distribute an initial 1.5 million free doses of the anti-parasite medication Albendazole. The medication will be given to high-risk populations in the 125 poorest municipalities in the country, covering 7 states: Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla and Veracruz. Since the medication requires a second treatment six months after the initial dose, a second treatment will be given later this year.

In November, OBI will then launch its program in Latin America with an initial distribution of medication that will treat millions of children in Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Peru. Six months later (May 2010), OBI will provide a second dose of the medication to those same children. A similar plan will take place in the Ivory Coast, with millions of children receiving two doses in a six-month timeframe beginning later this year. All told, the charity expects to distribute 26 million doses of free medication in addition to providing hands-on training to tens of millions this year alone.

In each country, OBI is working in conjunction with the government and thousands of churches that will distribute the medication and also provide basic hygiene training to combat future infestation. OBI is providing the medication, supervision and management of each program, along with providing anti-parasite educational materials designed by the World Health Organization.

Albendazole and Mabendazole are highly effective against a variety of internal parasites including pinworms, roundworms, tapeworms, whipworms and hookworms. In many cases, the worms consume as much as 25 percent of the food that an infested person eats, thus depriving the body of nutrition. This is especially harmful in a developing country where food is hard to come by. Young

children are exceptionally at risk. Other results of worm infestation are a weakened immune system, chronic sickness, stunted growth, a reduced cognitive ability, headaches and stomach pains.

OBI's anti-parasite campaign has been in place since 2003 and has treated over 22 million children to date in countries including China, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, Laos, Nigeria, Niger, Guatemala, Peru and Mexico. In October 2008, for the fifth time, OBI treated approximately 2 million women and children in one day in Peru utilizing a network of 2000 churches and over 42,000 volunteers. In Guatemala, OBI has worked with the Departments of Health and Education to facilitate the de-worming of Guatemala's entire population of over 2.1 million school age children in 2005 and 2006.

Says Bill Horan, "Children infested with parasites are always hungry, often sick, miss lots of school and suffer in terrible ways ranging from non-stop belly aches to stunted growth, chronic disease and muddled minds. With a pill costing less than a nickel and some very basic hygiene training, we can change all that."

To donate, volunteer, or read updates on OBI's efforts, please log on to www.ob.org and/or www.myowneyes.org.

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 tornadoes 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 209.3 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$1.7 billion to date.

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