

## **Operation Blessing Int'l And SAP Solidarity Fund To Deliver 10 New Boats To Japanese Fishermen Devastated By Tsunami**

### **Custom Made Boats, Built by Maine Company, to be Presented on March 10 in Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan**

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (February 27, 2012) – Operation Blessing International (OBI) and multinational software company, SAP, will present 10 new fishing boats to Japanese fishermen whose livelihoods were ruined in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

As part of the Virginia Beach-based humanitarian organization's ongoing efforts to help Japanese fishing communities devastated by the disaster, OBI commissioned 20 boats to be built by General Marine of Biddeford, ME. The first 10 boats were funded by a generous donation from SAP Solidarity Fund through its Tohoku Earthquake Aid and Relief Strategy (SAP TEARS) humanitarian program.

SAP Japan's CSR TEARS (Tohoku Earthquake Aid and Relief Strategy) team and OBI staff will officially present the new 10-boat mini-fleet to fishermen in ceremonies on March 10 in Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan, the day before the one-year anniversary of the disaster.

"We are so thankful for SAP's generous sponsorship of these first ten boats of OBI's program," said Bill Horan, OBI president. "The delivery of the 10 boats will be most helpful, since there remains a critical need. Today, there is a waiting list as long as a year, even longer, because Japanese boat builders are simply overwhelmed. We hope this will ease the burden for some," said Horan.

OBI is committed to help multiple fishing communities, which estimate 5,000 boats were lost in the tsunami. Since the 2011 disaster, OBI has been scouring Japan and has found more than 50 reliable used boats and motors that the charity purchased and delivered to selected families. Since those boat donations were 'a drop in the ocean of need' due to thousands of fishermen without work and boats, Horan and OBI commissioned General Marine to build the 20 new boats, which are based on a design that OBI developed in consultation with the local fishermen. In addition to fishing, the boats will be used for oyster and seaweed cultivation, harvesting shellfish and catching octopus.

In another project, OBI provided laptop computers to the JF Miyagi Fisheries Cooperative, for the fishermen to reach out to the nation via their own Web page. Since the project's launch, the cooperative has received pre-orders worth several million dollars for seafood to be delivered when the industry is revitalized.

OBI also provided \$650,000 worth of seaweed and oyster cultivation equipment to the Urato Islands, which are famous for oysters. OBI provided anchors, rope, scallop shells used for cultivating oysters, floats, nets, small trucks, and computers. Due to OBI's swift action, the oystermen were able to harvest in the same year as the tsunami, a timeline that was unthinkable by most in the community. In recognition of this achievement, the Mayor of Shiogama City honored OBI for getting them back on their feet so quickly.

Recently, OBI placed an order with a Chinese manufacturer to produce a special rope used by seaweed cultivators that is currently hard to find in Japan because of huge demand since the disaster. By delivering this rope, OBI is determined to help cultivators along the coast get back to work and see the return of income.

In the coming months, OBI hopes to continue its boat donation program and has found a manufacturer in China to produce a 23-foot fishing boat similar to a model favored by local Japanese fishermen.

“We will be launching a new sponsorship program where community groups, churches and other organizations across Japan and elsewhere will be able to donate to the cost of building new boats for fishing families.”

One of the first relief organizations on the ground in Japan, hours after the earthquake struck, OBI has delivered tons of relief supplies and equipment to tens of thousands of survivors through the charity’s Tohoku Operations Center in Tomiya, north of Sendai, Japan. To date, OBI has provided assistance to victims in Shiogama, Urato Islands (Katsurajima, Nonoshima, Sabusawa), Ishinomaki, Onagawa, Ogatsu, Tome, Minami Sanriku, Kessenuma, Watari, Yamamoto , Rikuzentakata, Otsuchi, Yamada, and Miyako, an area stretching 184 miles along the tsunami devastated coastline of Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures.

For more information log on to [www.ob.org](http://www.ob.org)

In Japanese, go to [www.objapan.org](http://www.objapan.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 23 countries around the world on a daily basis. In 2010, OBI was awarded Charity Navigator’s coveted 4 star rating for sound fiscal management for the 7th year in a row, a feat that only 2% of rated charities have ever achieved. In November 2010, Forbes named OBI as the 6th most efficient charity in America. Additionally, the Chronicle of Philanthropy currently ranks OBI as the 23rd largest charity and the 6th largest international charity. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 235 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$2.7 billion to date.

#### ABOUT SAP:

As market leader in enterprise application software, SAP (NYSE: SAP) helps companies of all sizes and industries run better. From back office to boardroom, warehouse to storefront, desktop to mobile device – SAP empowers people and organizations to work together more efficiently and use business insight more effectively to stay ahead of the competition. SAP applications and services enable more than 183,000 customers (includes customers from the acquisition of Sybase) to operate profitably, adapt continuously, and grow sustainably. For more information, visit [www.sap.com](http://www.sap.com).

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