

# **Operation Blessing International's David Darg Nominated For Academy Award For Documentary Filmed In Liberia: *Body Team 12***

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (January 14, 2016) – A short documentary that David Darg, Vice President of International Operations for the Virginia Beach-based humanitarian organization, Operation Blessing International, filmed in Liberia has been nominated for an Academy Award.

Darg filmed *Body Team 12* while he was in Liberia in 2014 at the height of the Ebola outbreak. Darg was directing Operation Blessing's efforts on the ground to set up the first chlorine production facility in that country's history. Chlorine, which kills the Ebola virus on contact, was in critically short supply before Operation Blessing set up the facility. The team produced tens of thousands of gallons of chlorine which was distributed to the Liberian government and to Lutheran Hospital, the largest public health institution in Liberia, to ten Ebola clinics in Monrovia and also used to set up hand washing stations all around the country. The President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, visited the facility in October 2014 and honored Operation Blessing for these efforts.

The gripping film chronicles a team of body collectors working with the Liberian Red Cross who remove dead bodies from homes and villages, take them to the local crematorium and burn the bodies so as to prevent further spread of the virus. Darg served as director and co-producer with Bryn Mooser. Executive Producers are Paul Allen and Olivia Wilde, with Operation Blessing's President, Bill Horan, as an associate producer along with Martha Rogers and Gareth Seltzer.

"I was astonished at the bravery of Liberia's Ebola body teams, and in particular, Garmai Sumo, the female body collector featured in *Body Team 12*," said Darg. "I was immediately inspired by her – by her fearlessness, determination and love for her community, and I knew I needed to tell this story as a tribute to this courage."

Operation Blessing continues to work in Liberia, even though the Ebola outbreak has waned. Today, the charity is running an Ebola Orphan Program to help thousands of children whose parents died of Ebola. The organization currently helps 171 children by providing them with a daily meal, school scholarships, clothing and home visits. Garmai Sumo, the star of the documentary, now runs that program for Operation Blessing.

To date, the film has helped to raise \$60,000 for Operation Blessing's Ebola Orphan Program.

*Body Team 12* will be broadcast nationally on HBO in early March.

This is Darg's first "Oscar" nomination, although other films he has directed/produced have won prestigious awards at major film festivals. Prior films – all stemming from his humanitarian work with Operation Blessing – include *The Rider and the Storm* (Hurricane Sandy), *Baseball in the Time of Cholera* (Haiti) and *Sun City Picture House* (Haiti).

The 88<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards will be presented on February 28, 2016 in Los Angeles.

For more information on Operation Blessing's Ebola Orphan Program and where to donate:

<http://www.ob.org/helping-orphans-amid-the-ebola-crisis/>

To watch a video about the Ebola Orphan Program: <http://www.ob.org/aftermath-of-a-terror-orphans-in-liberia/>

For more information on *Body Team 12*: <http://ryot.org/bodyteam12/>

# # #