



**RED RIBBON  
FOUNDATION**

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# Press Release

## ***Greenwich-based Red Ribbon Foundation Gives \$2500 to an AIDS Organization Hit Hard by the Earthquake in Haiti***

Greenwich, CT, March 4, 2010: The Red Ribbon Foundation (RRF), a Greenwich-based non-profit organization committed to winning the war against AIDS, recently donated \$2500 to GHESKIO Centers in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Founded in 1982, GHESKIO Centers, short for the Haitian Group for the Study of Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections, was the first institution in the world dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Operated by the Center for Global Health at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, GHESKIO has evolved into Haiti's official HIV/AIDS research and training center, and it maintains a clinic in Haiti's capital city.

Since the January 12th, 2010 earthquake GHESKIO has been providing humanitarian assistance and emergency care to those affected by the disaster while continuing to provide life-saving medications to people with HIV/AIDS. Specifically, the organization has also opened a refugee camp and field hospital for thousands of survivors. GHESKIO has provided continuous medical care in Haiti since 1982 - never once shutting its doors or charging fees. Its 28 centers care for roughly half of all Haitians receiving antiretroviral treatment, or about 12,000 patients.

According to UNAIDS, the HIV infection rate in Haiti is now roughly 2.2 percent of the population-- much lower than the 6.6 percent estimated to have been infected before GHESKIO, and its collaborator Boston-based Partners in Health, began targeted work there. GHESKIO used novel approaches, such as distributing phone cards to patients to keep in closer touch with their doctors, in order to treat those infected and prevent HIV's spread. Its model of treatment has been replicated worldwide.

The Red Ribbon Foundation raises money to fight AIDS through a large-scale music-oriented fundraising event held every two years. The proceeds of this event are then awarded as grants to organizations that demonstrate results as well as promising ideas for preventing the spread of AIDS. These grants fund prevention education programs for high-risk individuals, cutting-edge research to eradicate the disease, and assistance programs for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Since its inception in 1994, Red Ribbon has given nearly \$2 million to HIV/AIDS organizations. This is the first occasion that the organization has supported a program in Haiti. According to Nicole Hazard, the Foundation's Executive Director, Red Ribbon saw that those suffering from

HIV/AIDS in Haiti, like any vulnerable group, would be hit hard by the absence of critical health infrastructure like clinics and hospitals: “Our board knew that many patients’ medication regimens would be interrupted, and key prevention programs would be upended. We wanted to show our support for the Haitian people at this time of crisis, as well as our faith in GHESKIO to help rebuild. GHESKIO is an organization that has been incredibly successful in lowering HIV rates in a country bedeviled by poverty, climate issues, and political challenges. They will persevere and we’re proud to stand by them.”

For more information about the Red Ribbon Foundation, visit [www.redribbonfoundation.org](http://www.redribbonfoundation.org).