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WORLD AIDS ORPHANS DAY LAUNCHES MAY 7th COALITION IN LOS ANGELES

Santa Monica, CA, May 7th, 2006 – In a massive mobilization for children affected by AIDS around the world, more hundreds of people gathered to launch a coalition today, Sunday May 7th from Noon until 3 p.m. at Santa Monica State Beach (parking at Bernard Way/ Ocean Park Blvd) with an aerial art display of art, entitled “CIRCLE OF HOPE”. **One Global Tribe, NextAid, PEP/LA, YouthAIDS, FORGE, Empowerment Works, APLA, Crossroads Teen AIDS Ambassadors, AIDS Service Center, Students for International Change, UCLA AIDS Ambassadors, Campbell Hall AIDS Awareness Club, Volunteers for International Partnership, Uganda Community Organization of California, and Peace Beads** launched the **MAY 7 COALITION (www.7May.org)**, an international coalition sponsored by **FXB International (www.fxb.org)**, dedicated to bringing unity and solidarity to youth around the world affected by HIV/AIDS, and to creating a platform for children to have a voice and make a difference on World AIDS Orphans Day (WAOD) each year.

Activities included inspirational speeches by leading members of the coalition organizations and by Congressional candidate Marci Winograd, spoken word performances (by KAOS Project Blowed Youth Poetry Team), creative activities for teens, community service opportunities, and the formation of a large **CIRCLE OF HOPE**.

Renowned aerial artist, **John Quigley**, (spectralq.com) organized participants into a human image, forming a huge circle with an image of a mother and child inside and the word "HOPE" underneath. The image was photographed from the sky and will be circulated by partner organizations to launch a public awareness campaign urging mayors to sign a special proclamation to recognize World AIDS Orphans Day and the objectives set out in the 2001 United Nations Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS.

There are presently more than 15 million children orphaned by AIDS in the world. By 2010, that figure is expected to rise to 100 million children. Every 15 seconds, a child loses one of his or her parents to AIDS.

Other “circles of hope” were created across five continents in partnership with international organizations, Francois Xavier-Bagnoud International (FXB), Global Action for Children (GAC), PLAN USA, African Regional Youth Initiative (ARYI) and many others. Young people read “Messages of Hope” designed to inspire action and unity across borders.

Activities on World AIDS Orphans Day 2006 were part of a worldwide effort, initiated by Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Association, urging mayors and elected officials to sign a proclamation recognizing World AIDS Orphans Day and the objectives set out in the 2001 United Nations Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS. World AIDS Orphans Day began as a march through Wall Street in New York in May 2002. In 2004, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City joined mayors of more than 40 U.S. cities. *Elected representatives from 271 cities in 38 countries have signed so far.* As part of its advocacy campaign for children affected and/or infected by HIV/AIDS, FXB established a Symbolic Global Safety Net to which more than two million people worldwide added their names, each name adding a stitch in the symbolic net to support AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. Each year, WAOD has mobilized greater support from around the world.

To obtain high resolution photos or video or more information about the May 7 Coalition, please contact Alison Fast (Email: alisonfast@mac.com) cell 310-497-7109.

WAOD 2006 is an official Big Sunday event in Los Angeles (project #233).

For more information:

www.7May.org

www.WorldOrphansDay.org

www.BigSunday.com