

News release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

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St. Thomas University Documentary Film Highlights Hope in Three University-Haiti Long Term Collaborative Development Projects

Miami Gardens, Florida – April 24, 2009 – St. Thomas University will hold a press conference on **Thursday, April 30th 2009 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Atrium of the Main Library** highlighting a new documentary that chronicles the university's partnership in three long-term, sustainable development projects in the poorest region of Haiti.

The documentary, *"Blooming Hope: Harvesting Smiles in Port-de-Paix"* is produced by the St. Thomas University Institute for Communication, Entertainment and Media. The film focuses on a fair-trade coffee collaboration, a women's artisan initiative, and a solar energy project. The three projects are part of the university's collaborative work (with Amor en Acción and Catholic Charities of Miami) in the Archdiocese of Miami's sister diocese relationship with Port-de-Paix, Haiti. The diocese of Port-de-Paix is roughly equivalent to the Northwest Department of Haiti - one of the poorest and most deforested regions in the country.

The press conference panel will consist of the President of the University, Monsignor Franklyn Casale; the Blooming Hope producer, Prof. Marcela Moyano-Rosero; and the Coordinator of the University's Center of Justice and Peace, Prof. Anthony Vinciguerra. Also speaking will be students of the STU School of Business's Social Entrepreneurship course. These students have recently returned from Haiti where they furthered work on the three projects.

Featured in the documentary are Haitian individuals who are working on, and whose lives are being concretely impacted by, the collaborative projects. This includes: Elicoeur Beaubrum, a coffee farmer-leader from the town of Ma Wouj, Tata Dumaside, an artisan craftswoman from Jean Rabel, and school children from the remote seaside village of Baie-de-Henne. The film shows the struggles and the promise of the Port-de-Paix community and the process from conception through implementation of these three community-initiated sustainable development projects.

We ask that you assist St. Thomas University in this collaborative effort with the Port-de-Paix community through sponsorship, publicity and fundraising events to support these projects. The students are currently garnering sponsors on a corporate and individual level. Funds received from sponsors will fund the film's production and distribution budget. Sponsors may participate on four different sponsorship package levels. Haiti is the poorest region in the western hemisphere, but it doesn't have to be. This is an opportunity to walk hand-in-hand with our brothers and sisters in our back yard in a way that leads to authentic development for all. Will you plant a seed?

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