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Governor Crist Asks Floridians to Donate Wisely to Aid Survivors of Disasters

~ An informed approach to disaster donations maximizes ability to help make a difference abroad ~

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today joined officials from the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) in urging Floridians to donate to survivors of disasters, including those in Haiti.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families impacted by the devastating Haiti earthquake," said Governor Crist. "Now is a critical time for the people of Haiti, when monetary contributions are most needed. If you are in a position to contribute, I encourage you to work with an organization you trust."

An effective way for Floridians to assist with relief efforts is to make a cash contribution to a humanitarian organization they are familiar with and trust. Information on identifying humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations and accepting cash donations for their efforts in Haiti is available by calling the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at (703) 276-1914, or by visiting www.cidi.org.

"Monetary contributions are crucial during disaster recovery efforts, such as those in Haiti," said Interim Director David Halstead. "Donating judiciously will ensure that Floridians hard earned dollars are reaching the intended cause."

Today, the Governor also announced the activation of the "Neighbors to the Rescue" through the Florida Disaster Recovery Fund. The fund is Florida based and particularly aids in regional long term disaster recovery efforts. Donations can be made at www.FLADisasterRecoveryFund.org or by calling 1-800-825-3786. The American Red Cross has also established an immediate way to contribute cash donations. Text messaging 'HAITI' from a cell phone to "90999" will automatically donate \$10 to assist with relief efforts.

Volunteer Florida, the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, is also available to assist with volunteer coordination and donations to local relief organizations. Floridians can visit www.volunteerflorida.org and www.whitehouse.gov for more information. Please visit www.FloridaDisaster.org for more information on Florida's emergency management program.

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