



Wednesday 20 January 2010

**MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SchoolAid founder Sean Gordon urges Australian schools to take action  
to support the children of Haiti**

SCHOOLAID has launched an appeal to its community of schools across Australia in response to the tragic disaster in Haiti and urges teachers, students and parents to demonstrate their support when school resumes next week.

“SchoolAid joins with the rest of the world in expressing our horror at the recent disaster in Haiti,” says SchoolAid founder and former school principal, Sean Gordon.

“Children are often the most vulnerable in disasters like this, with families, homes, schools and communities torn apart. The most important step is to restore children’s lives to some sort of routine as soon as possible. This is most often in the form of returning them to school.

“SchoolAid has teamed up with Save the Children and Plan International, established aid organisations in Haiti, to present a united force to address the immediate and short term needs of the country’s children.”

Plan and Save the Children already have teams on the ground in Haiti and are sharing regular progress reports on the situation and aid efforts. SchoolAid will work with these organisations to develop programs to guarantee the rights of the children of Haiti, with an emphasis on water and sanitation, health, education, shelter and child protection.

“Given SchoolAid’s successful programs in Banda Aceh, Samoa and the Victorian Bushfires, schools can be confident that funds raised will directly help kids impacted by this tragedy,” Mr Gordon said.

Since SchoolAid’s inception in 1999, more than \$2.5million has been raised by 200,000 school students across Australia. The organisation’s significant achievements include:

- Following the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2005, SchoolAid raised more than \$250,000, and in partnership with Plan, rebuilt an entire school in Banda Aceh. The school includes a garden where children grow vegetables and learn about health and nutrition, as well as a child club, where children learn about their rights and responsibilities in their community.
- In the aftermath of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, over 700 participating schools raised more than \$860,000 through SchoolAid – our most successful appeal yet. These funds were distributed to 25 individual schools in the form of grants to help rebuild the school communities. SchoolAid also provided significant grants to the Australian Children’s Music Foundation and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to implement projects to assist in re-building the lives of children and education in bushfire affected areas.

“Australian school children will certainly be aware of the mounting death toll in Haiti and may feel distressed and helpless at the scale of this disaster,” said Mr Gordon.

“Thanks to our strong relationships with teachers and principals throughout Australia, SchoolAid is in a unique position to empower school children to turn their compassion into action by supporting them to raise funds, send messages of hope and to share in the rebuilding efforts.

“I urge teachers, students and parents to visit [www.schoolaid.org.au](http://www.schoolaid.org.au) to find out more about our Haiti Earthquake Emergency Appeal and how to take action and raise vital funds to help children affected by this catastrophe.”

SchoolAid is a non-profit organisation which provides resources to principals and teachers to support them in creating philanthropic, caring students. SchoolAid believes that children have an innate sense of compassion and empathy, particularly for other children, and we provide children with the means to engage with children around the world – kids helping kids – and turn their fundraising efforts into genuine, engaged philanthropy.

**SchoolAid founder Sean Gordon is available for interviews.**

**Attached image courtesy of Save the Children.**

For further information, please contact:

**Jessica Barr**  
**Campaign Manager**  
**SchoolAid Australia**

**02 8904 0566**  
**0404 159 763**  
**[jess@schoolaid.org.au](mailto:jess@schoolaid.org.au)**