

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED 6pm Monday October 17th

HAVEN VOLUNTEER LET'S THE SPIRIT RISE

George Hook Says Life in Haiti More Difficult than any Scrum...

Book Launch captures one of the final Haven Build it Week Challenges

October 17th, 2011 – Today Irish NGO Haven launched 'Let the Spirit Rise', a Volunteer driven book capturing the images and experiences of some of the 1,000 plus Irish volunteers who have travelled to Haiti with the Irish Charity. The last traditional style Build It Week will take place at the end of this month.

The book, 'Let the Spirit Rise', displays the highs and lows of a week as a Haven volunteer in Haiti where teams of skilled and unskilled labourers construct houses for local communities. According to Louise Roden, the volunteer and photographer who spearheaded this book "My time in Haiti changed my life. Not only do Haven volunteers give time and energy to local Haitians, but Haiti gave us so much more – a new glass with which to see the world through".

Speaking at the launch in the Mansion House Leslie Buckley, Founder of Haven said, "The experience one garners as a volunteer is truly incredible. I've spent a lot of time in Haiti, both in a work capacity and with Haven, and have to say that it has changed my whole perspective on life". He continued to highlight that, moving forward, Haven would be changing the format of Build It Weeks going forward and would focus on bringing four or five smaller groups to Haiti in 2011 to assist with their year-round house building programme.

By the end of the year Haven will have built 2,300 homes in Haiti. The Irish NGO, founded in 2009 also provides training, emergency relief and community development programmes. According to Buckley, "Haven has a target of building 10,000 houses by 2014. We are currently on target and will be focusing on this provision in the coming year along with the necessary training and community development programmes to assist stimulate micro-economies in the local communities".

Also speaking at the event was long-term Haven supporter George Hook who has travelled to Haiti on numerous occasions. According to the Irish broadcaster and rugby pundit "I always thought life on the rugby pitch was tough but life in Haiti is one hell of a scrum. I am still shocked at the appalling conditions that thousands of people are living in. The earthquake was nearly two years ago but still there are hundreds of thousands of people living in tent cities strewn into the countryside around Port au Prince".

'Let the Spirit Rise' features images taken by Louise Roden and Sean Breithaupt, and includes stories from many of the volunteers. The book was designed by Tom Kelly and Haven is extremely grateful to all contributors and supporters of the project. 'Let the Spirit Rise' is available for €10 from Haven. Please call (01) 6815440 to order a copy.

See attached Cover Image of 'Let the Spirit Rise' by Sean Breithaupt.

For more information please contact Lorna Cronnelly, Communications Manager Haven, Tel: 087 7738853; Email: lorna.cronnelly@havenpartnership.com

Notes to Editor:

About Haven

Haven was set up by Irish businessman, Leslie Buckley and his wife, Carmel Buckley, in January 2009. The NGO is working solely in Haiti, building houses and sustainable communities, while providing emergency relief in the wake of the earthquake which struck last January 2010, killing 230,000 people and leaving 1.5 million people homeless.

Examples of work to date:

- By the end of 2011 Haven will have built, repaired and upgraded 2,300 homes in Haiti.
- Haven has built over 1,300 latrines, 308 showers and 20 community shelters.
- Over 3,000 local people have been trained in hygiene promotion, conflict resolution and vocational training to empower communities to pursue their livelihoods.
- Haven has employed 600 local people in their projects.
- Over 10,000 children in 13 schools have been provided with clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene training.
- After Build it Week 2011, over 1,000 volunteers will have travelled with Haven to Haiti. The format of the traditional Build it Week will change going forward.
- For more information see www.havenpartnership.com