

Building Hope: Youth to Benefit from Launch of The Torii Hunter Project

LAS VEGAS (Dec. 9, 2008) – Torii Hunter, in partnership with the Heart of a Champion Foundation, and in conjunction with the Angels Baseball Foundation, launches **The Torii Hunter Project's** Education Initiative, that will provide college scholarships and character development curriculum to students in four states. Students in Anaheim, CA, Pine Bluff, AR, Las Vegas, NV and Minneapolis, MN will benefit from the program.

The **Torii Hunter Project's** Education Initiative officially kicked off with an announcement at the Bellagio Hotel. The initiative, which will be operated by the Heart of a Champion Foundation, focuses on two aspects: the **Hunter's Hundred** scholarship program, which will provide college scholarships to 100 students from Anaheim, Pine Bluff and Las Vegas, NV over the next four years and the **Heart of a Champion** character education curriculum, which will be delivered to middle school and junior high school students in Anaheim, CA, Pine Bluff, AR, and Minneapolis, MN. The initiative has a dedicated website, www.toriihunterproject.com.

"The way I grew up was pretty tough," said Hunter. "I vowed to myself, that if I ever got the opportunity to help anybody that I was going to do it. That's one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about helping kids. Seeing the difference I can make in somebody's life is powerful. I'm glad that I can in some small way give back, because I feel blessed to be where I'm at."

The focus on character development and assisting students with a college education is important to Hunter who has seen these as two key elements for young people to have an opportunity for a successful future.

"By combining the two areas in this initiative, Torii will be able to help secondary school students be better prepared for the future through effective character training; then he will provide a means for them to further their academic pursuits by helping them attend college," said Steve Riach, Founder and Board Chairman of the **Heart of a Champion Foundation**, Hunter's partner in the effort. "It is a comprehensive approach to giving students the opportunity to elevate their lives. We are excited to partner with Torii."

The **Heart of a Champion** program is regarded as the nation's premier character education program for secondary school students. The comprehensive curriculum focuses on nine core character traits: Commitment, Leadership, Perseverance, Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Self Control and Compassion, and is delivered over the entire nine-month school year. The program incorporates innovative print, video and online tools to instill and reinforce positive character and life skills. For the past eight years, the program has produced measurable results in schools in 18 states. In this initiative, the program will initially impact approximately 7,000 students in Anaheim, Pine Bluff and Minneapolis. The Angels Foundation is partnering with Torii to reach students in the Anaheim area with the program.

Hunter's Hundred will provide a total of 100 scholarships to qualifying students during the years 2009-2012. Students will be required to meet certain criteria, including, but not limited to, financial need, academic standing and attendance, and will be selected without regard to race, gender or ethnicity.

Each year, beginning with the 2009-10 school year, 25 scholarships will be presented to select high school graduates. The recipients will be selected from the Orangewood Children's Home in Orange, CA, the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy in Las Vegas, NV, and the Pine Bluff, AR school district.

Andre Agassi commented, "We are grateful that Torii Hunter has selected Agassi Prep as a recipient of this significant scholarship gift. As a college preparatory school, our ultimate goal is to fulfill our students' dreams to go to college. Torii Hunter clearly shares our belief that with education, there is hope."

"We are thrilled and excited that a professional athlete of Torii Hunter's caliber cares so much about Orangewood kids," said Cal Winslow, the Chief Executive Officer of the Orangewood Children's Home. "His support will make the dreams of college come true for many former foster youth."

The overall goal of the initiative is to raise 5 million dollars over the next 4 years to fund both aspects. Reaching this goal will enable **The Torii Hunter Project** to provide the Heart of a Champion program to over 50,000 middle school and junior high students, and to fund college scholarships for at least 100 high school graduates.

"I am excited about what this initiative will accomplish," Hunter said. "Ultimately, if we assist students in their efforts to prepare for and attend college, these students will 'repay' our society by entering society and the workforce as adult men and women of character who will positively impact their families, their places of work, and their communities."

About The Torii Hunter Project

The Torii Hunter Project is a comprehensive, long-term effort to impact youth in need in various parts of the United States. The project has four areas of focus related to youth: Sports, Community, Education, and Wellness. Torii and his wife Katrina have personally contributed over \$1 million to the project, and are joining with other partners to fund efforts in each area of **The Torii Hunter Project**. These efforts include youth athletic facilities in Southern California and Pine Bluff, AR; assistance for children in need, homeless families, children with terminal illnesses, and other community-based and wellness support. More information is available at www.toriihunterproject.com.

About The Heart of a Champion

The **Heart of a Champion Foundation**, a 501c3 based in Dallas, TX, was founded in 1997, and for the past 8 years has provided character programs to middle school and junior high students in 18 states. The innovative, research-based program combines video elements with an interactive print curriculum to reach today's "sight and sound" generation. The comprehensive, full-year has produced significant attitudinal, behavioral and academic shifts in students. **Heart of a Champion** partners with entities such as Coca-Cola, the Kansas City Chiefs, the Dallas Cowboys, the Houston Texans, Express Professional Services, and individuals to impact youth across America with proven effective character training tools. **Heart of a Champion** also offers corporate ethics programs, working with Fortune 500 companies and other businesses to produce measurable results and bottom-line change. For information, visit www.heartofachampion.org and www.hoctraining.com.

About The Angels Baseball Foundation

Through their involvement in a variety of outreach programs and non-profit organizations, Angels Baseball has proven to be a valuable member of the surrounding community. The Angels Baseball Foundation focuses on initiatives aimed to create and improve Education, Healthcare, Arts & Sciences, and Community related youth programs throughout the region, in addition to providing children the opportunity to experience the great game of baseball and its countless positive attributes. Since its inception in 2004, the Angels Baseball Foundation has

awarded grants to many organizations throughout the community, ranging from music and sports programs to at-risk youth shelters. The Foundation has worked with various groups that promote the health of the community through awareness, treatment and research programs – all with a common goal of improving the lives of others and helping to shape the lives of youth throughout the Greater Los Angeles Area. For information, please visit www.losangeles.angels.mlb.com/ana/community/baseball_foundation.jsp.