

ELIMINATE

Kiwanis eliminating maternal/neonatal tetanus



Contacts:

Jo Lynn Garing
Kiwanis International
(O)317-217-6171/ (M)317-508-6337
jgaring@kiwanis.org

Kini Schoop
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
(O)212-922-2634/ (M)917-415-6508
kschoop@unicefusa.org

Kiwanis, UNICEF join forces to save 129 million mothers and newborns *The Eliminate Project will protect mothers and babies from Tetanus*

Las Vegas [Thursday, June 24, 2010 (3:30 PM PT)]- - Kiwanis International and UNICEF have joined forces to save the lives of babies and their mothers by eliminating maternal/neonatal tetanus (MNT), a disease that kills an estimated 60,000 newborns and 30,000 mothers each year. UNICEF Ambassador and actor Tea Leoni delivered the announcement at the 95th Annual Kiwanis International Convention.

“Kiwanis believes that no baby or mother should have to suffer the devastating effects of MNT,” said Kiwanis International President Paul Palazzolo. “Kiwanis will mobilize its nearly 600,000 family members to become tireless advocates for these children and raise needed funds to defeat this deadly disease.”

MNT is easily prevented by a series of three vaccinations to women of childbearing age, costing roughly US\$1.80. **The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal/neonatal tetanus** will raise US\$110 million over the next five years to fill the funding gap required to provide an estimated 387 million doses of the vaccine.

The Eliminate Project will deliver life saving vaccines to the most vulnerable women and children in the world: those in remote and difficult to reach areas; conflict zones; and with little access to healthcare.

“With Kiwanis by our side, we will be able to conquer maternal/neonatal tetanus,” said U.S. Fund for UNICEF President and Chief Executive Officer Caryl Stern. “I’ve seen how this disease devastates families. Infants suffer, while mothers are unable to comfort their babies. Kiwanis is providing the final push that will protect vulnerable women and their newborns.”

The majority of mothers and newborns dying of MNT live in 40 countries located in Africa, and Southern and East Asia. The disease kills one baby every nine minutes. Its effects are

excruciating—tiny newborns suffer repeated, painful convulsions and extreme sensitivity to light and touch.

“As a mother of two children, I have known the great joy of welcoming a new life into this world. I couldn’t imagine watching my child suffer and die from a disease that is as easily preventable as MNT is,” said Tea Leoni. “With this new partnership between Kiwanis and UNICEF, so many lives will be saved.”

Not only will The Eliminate Project protect women and babies from tetanus, the project also will create a path for other services, such as clean water, nutrition and other vaccines, to reach the world’s most vulnerable people.

Partnering with UNICEF, Kiwanis successfully completed its first global campaign for children to virtually eliminate iodine deficiency disorders (IDD), the leading cause of preventable mental impairment. Kiwanis raised and leveraged more than US\$100 million, which helped change lives in 103 nations. The number of households estimated to be consuming iodized salt has jumped from less than 20 percent in 1990 to more than 70 percent, and the effort has been heralded as one of the most successful health initiatives in the world.

For additional information about The Eliminate Project, go to: www.TheEliminateProject.org

About Kiwanis International

Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for college students, Key Club for teens, Builders Club for adolescents, K-Kids for elementary students and Aktion Club for adults with disabilities, dedicate more than 18 million volunteer hours to strengthen communities and serve children annually. The Kiwanis International family comprises 586,000 adult and youth members in 80 countries and geographic areas. For more information about Kiwanis International, please visit www.kiwanis.org.

About UNICEF

UNICEF has saved more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization in the world. Working in over 150 countries, UNICEF provides children with health care, clean water, nutrition, education, emergency relief, and more. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports UNICEF’s work through fundraising, advocacy, and education in the United States.

UNICEF is at the forefront of efforts to reduce child mortality worldwide. There has been substantial progress—the annual number of under-five deaths dropped from 13 million in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008. But still, 24,000 children die each day from preventable causes. Our mission is to do whatever it takes to make that number zero by giving children the essentials for a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.