



Faith Hill, Tim McGraw give \$1 million to help Katrina kids

Funds from country superstars will be used to provide art therapy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cathy Malchiodi, ATR-BC, Professional Relations
American Art Therapy Association (AATA)
5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria VA 22304
888-290-0878 or info@arttherapy.org

Alexandria, VA-- Faith Hill and Tim McGraw have granted \$1 million to a new nonprofit that is caring for the overlooked children of Katrina, helping them heal and making sure they stay in school. The country music stars are providing the funding through their Neighbors Keeper Foundation to Community Initiatives Foundation (Cif), an organization that provides art therapy to hundreds of children living in Renaissance Village, a trailer community near Baton Rouge. The art therapy program has been in operation during the two years since Katrina swept away the children's New Orleans-area homes. The gift from the Neighbor's Keeper Foundation will expand services for more than 200 children and allow Cif to develop new models that address the needs of even more children who have experienced the trauma of natural disasters, domestic violence, poverty, and neglect.

"The generous gift from Faith and Tim will let us provide the comfort and understanding of therapy, and the steady hands and encouraging hearts these children need to continue growing and learning so they can stand on their own as adults," said Sr. Judith Brun, director of Community Initiatives Foundation. Karla Leopold, ATR, art therapist and marriage and family therapist, notes, "This generous gift acknowledges the needs of traumatized children and the power of art therapy. It allows the *Katrina Through the Eyes of Children* team to continue our work and to develop a training center for those who work with children suffering trauma."

The children's art now also will help others through an exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Lisa Falls, ATR-BC, explains, "There are plans to raise funds so that the art show can travel, with an educational component about how art therapy can be used in traumatic events and natural disasters." The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has also released an announcement about the art show, highlighting the commitment of art therapists and others to relief efforts with traumatized children.

Art therapy is widely recognized as a form of intervention and disaster mental health relief for children and adults. In the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, art therapists assisted disaster relief efforts in New York, Washington DC, and throughout the nation. More recently, art therapy has been highlighted for its role in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with newly returned military from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The American Art Therapy Association, (AATA) Inc., was founded in 1969 and develops and promotes educational, professional, and ethical standards for the practice of art therapy. AATA provides information to its members and the public regarding the field of art therapy through publications, a scholarly journal, conferences, and a web site (www.arttherapy.org).

For more information about *Katrina Through the Eyes of Children: Art by Displaced Children at Renaissance Village*, visit www.katrinaexhibit.org .

For more information about Community Initiatives Foundation, please contact Sister Judith Brun, CSJ, jbrun@judithbrun.com or call 225-921-7931.