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PRESS RELEASE

Local youth program rallies the community to help others in need

Snellville, GA: Despite the frigid temperatures, rain and at times, snow flurries, the members, parents, volunteers and the community-at-large came out in record numbers for the Teens for Jeans and Help for Haiti Service Projects hosted by Diamond In The Rough Youth Development Program, Incorporated (DITR). The youth leaders of the local non-profit organization that serves girls ages 4-18 had no idea that the projects would result in such an outpouring of support from the community.

The local mentoring and leadership program has received numerous awards for youth-driven service projects and requires members of the organization to give back to the community in ways and for causes that are near and dear to their hearts.

Jenai Washington, a long time member and current Vice President of Special Programs for the DITR Youth Advisory Board, brought the concept of hosting the Teens for Jeans Project to the other leaders of the program and in no time, the word spread and plans were put in place. Originally created three years ago by Aeropostle stores, the project was designed to provide gently worn jeans to homeless youth in the community. Weeks into planning the campaign for jeans, the earthquake hit the nation of Haiti, piercing the hearts of the members of DITR, creating an urgency to help the victims there and resulting in a second project called Help for Haiti.

To maximize the efforts of the community project, DITR partnered with Disney and their Give A Day, Get A Day campaign. Through this partnership, DITR reached out to the community-at-large, mobilizing teams to collect as many jeans, non-perishable food items, medical supplies, baby food and toiletry items. The response was enormous, resulting in over 735 volunteers who collected over 3,000 pairs of jeans for the teens and tens of thousands of items for the people of Haiti.

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Over three weeks the event was promoted and volunteers set up teams and coordinated drives in their local schools, churches, jobs and neighborhoods. On a cold Saturday morning members of DITR and community volunteers rolled up their sleeves bundled up in hats, coats, and layers of clothing as they loaded, unloaded and sorted through thousands of items dropped off by cars, trucks, and vans.

Participants shared great stories of their experience including D. Gieke who said, "We spent the past two weeks taking in jeans from friends, family and co-workers. It was really nice to see a little stack of jeans in the mornings when I'd arrive at work that everyone had gathered. This experience also gave us the opportunity to help my son learn about people less fortunate."

Although exhausted at the end of the day, it was very rewarding to see the caravans of cars, trucks, and vans dropping jeans off to the local Aeropostle Stores and the other donations to New Birth Church who coordinated the transportation of the items to Haiti.

Based on the overwhelming response from the community, the Jeans for Teens and Help For Haiti Campaign was not only another successful community service project coordinated by the youth of Diamond In The Rough, it was also a memorable experience for the hundreds who gave of their time and effort to bring smiles to the thousands who will benefit.

For more information on Diamond In The Rough or more comments from project participants, visit www.ditr.org.