



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 2010

## **Dr. Comfort Donates \$1,000,000 in Shoes to Relief Missions in Haiti**

**Summary** – Devastation in Haiti has left many individuals and corporations searching for ways to help. Dr. Comfort receives and supports many philanthropic requests for shoe donations, and donates in excess of \$2,000,000 in shoes and orthotic inserts each year. Through several charity and mission organizations, Dr. Comfort has found a way to donate over \$1,000,000 worth of shoes and inserts to survivors of the quakes in Haiti. Getting the shoes in is not an easy task. But Dr. Comfort is working diligently with these organizations and will be able to get the shoes in to those who need them after this first wave of rescue.

January's 7.0 earthquake in Haiti left an already impoverished people even more helpless and destitute. The quake killed an estimated 200,000 people, injured another estimated 250,000, and left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Amid the devastation, aftershocks continued to rumble, plaguing the people with panic and fear. As we go on with our busy days at work, it's hard to imagine what any of us can do to help. Sympathies for the suffering Haitians have left many individuals and corporations searching for ways to reach out and provide relief for those affected.

Even before the quake, the transportation system in Haiti was poor. Roads were often no more than hard-packed dirt, full of holes and chaos as there is no real system of order or law. Many Haitian people don't have the means to own a car or to pay bus fares, so their main mode of transportation is their feet. Even healthy people can incur much damage and injury to their feet in the midst of so much walking in those rough conditions.

Dr. Comfort, provider of diabetic footwear, receives and supports many philanthropic requests for shoe donations and donates in excess of \$2,000,000 in shoes and orthotic inserts each year. Requests come in from a wide range of domestic and international organizations. Most are facilitated through the many dedicated podiatrists and other podiatric professionals who work with Dr. Comfort. Upon hearing of the massive destruction in Haiti, Dr. Comfort immediately began to investigate ways to help.

“We may not be able to build new roads or provide better transportation,” says Todd Carter, Director of Pharmacy Sales for Dr. Comfort. “But we can offer comfort and support for the tired feet of many Haitians.” Carter visited Haiti in 2003 as part of a medical mission team to Northwest Haiti Christian Mission. His family has sponsored an orphan there ever since. “They’re always in need of shoes for their various programs. The orphans they care for, the elderly, the sick in their clinics—they see so many people who walk long distances or have injured and ailing feet. Our shoes can really make a difference for them.”

But Dr. Comfort didn’t stop there. The need is so great and there are so many agencies working in various parts of the country amidst different groups of people, it wasn’t long before a small donation turned into a HUGE donation, encompassing 6 more organizations. In addition to the Northwest Haiti Christian Mission, Dr. Comfort is sending shoes to the following: Waves of Mercy, The Crudem Foundation, Dr. Nancy Larco, Air Mobile Ministries, Lashbrook Family Ministries, and Masters Provision. All totaled, Dr. Comfort will be sending 6,000 pairs of shoes to the people of Haiti. Getting the shoes in the country is not an easy task, so Dr. Comfort will be working diligently with these organizations in the weeks to come, making sure that once this first wave of rescue winds down, the shoes are on the feet of the Haitians they serve.

“Looking at the devastation caused by the earthquakes in Haiti, it’s hard to imagine being able to do anything that will help,” says Rick Kanter, CEO of Dr. Comfort Shoes. “But every donation and every act of charity—however big or small—helps at least one person deal with the horrific effects of this tragedy. It’s only through a multitude of these acts from all of us that these people will be able to begin to deal with their losses and put their lives back together. Our prayers go out to those affected and we’re grateful to be fortunate enough to do our small part to help.”

**About Dr. Comfort** – Dr. Comfort Shoes (<http://drcomfort.com>) was founded in 2002 and has grown to be a leader in the diabetic footwear industry. Located just outside of Milwaukee, WI, Dr. Comfort carries over 40 styles of shoes, as well as gel and bio-mechanic inserts, off-the-shelf diabetic inserts and diabetic socks. Dr. Comfort also has its own orthotics lab that performs shoe modifications and manufactures custom inserts and other custom orthotics.

**About Diabetic Shoes** – In 1993, Congress amended Medicare statutes to provide partial reimbursement for extra-depth shoes and shoe inserts for qualifying Medicare Part B patients with diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has estimated 86,000 lower limb amputations due to diabetes occur annually, and that a comprehensive foot care program can reduce diabetic foot amputations between 45-85%. To qualify for Medicare reimbursement, diabetic shoes and inserts must meet certain specifications and must be professionally fit by a qualified health professional, which includes pharmacies.

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