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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **HARMONIKIDS TO PROVIDE UNIQUE MUSIC THERAPY TO EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS/CHILD SLAVERY VICTIMS IN HAITI**

*April 26 2010, Los Angeles, CA.* ~ In the second week of May, musician Gary Allegretto will take his nonprofit organization Harmonikids (<http://www.harmonikids.org>) on a music therapy mission to aid children in Port Au Prince, Haiti who are not only earthquake survivors but who are also “restaveks” – a Creole word used for those who are victims of child slavery.

World-recognized as a powerful and effective mode of communication, restoration, and healing music therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals. Harmonikids is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides music therapy to special needs children worldwide using harmonicas and entertaining lessons. Since 1985 founding director Gary Allegretto has been actively providing the therapeutic healing power of music to kids with incredible physical and emotional challenges. His widespread and diverse missions have included those traumatized by such natural disasters as the tsunami in Indonesia and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana.

Winner of the recent Alternate Roots Magazine's Songs for Social Change Contest, Gary Allegretto has received recognition both as a musician and humanitarian. He was gifted his first harmonica from his ailing grandfather as a small child, and has been giving the same gift of music and joy to special needs children through Harmonikids for 25 years and ongoing. His musical talents have become his passport to stages worldwide and more; his music has received much critical acclaim, reached the top of radio charts, been featured in soundtracks for motion pictures, and received multiple Grammy nomination considerations.

In Allegretto's words “Harmonikids directly provides these children shiny new harmonicas and gentle, entertaining music lessons in the most devastating time of their life. In spite of their hardship, kids are irresistibly drawn to the harmonica with it's child-friendly simplicity, pocket-sized portability, and warm voice-like tone. In it they find a way to express themselves. In addition to the post-traumatic stress relieving benefits, I have seen Harmonikids programs effectively replenish self-esteem, confidence, hope, and joy into children's lives. Simply put,

Harmonikids provides the joy of music to nurture their spirits and help them return to being children again.... or as I like to say, they find the healing power of music ~ right under their nose!"

Harmonikids' Haitian mission is made possible with the support of friends and organizations. The Restevek Foundation ([www.restavekfreedom.org](http://www.restavekfreedom.org)) are providing coordination, logistical, and on-the-ground support. Volunteer Marc Lempert will assist. Hohner Harmonicas Inc. ([www.hohnerusa.com](http://www.hohnerusa.com)) has generously donated 1000 harmonicas for the cause.

***Harmonikids needs your help!*** Individuals may contribute by making tax-deductible donations directly on Harmonikids website, or hold fundraising events such as benefit concerts and cause-oriented functions. If you can help in other ways, Harmonikids would love to hear from you! Readers can also forward this document to their media contacts, as media professionals can assist simply by providing coverage. Your support, generosity, and efforts will allow Harmonikids to continue to bring relief to those less privileged. Everyone can make a difference, and you can start by raising awareness, right this moment.

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*Gary Allegretto is available for additional comment / interview: (323) 605-8742 or [gallegetto@earthlink.net](mailto:gallegetto@earthlink.net). Photos, video footage and complete descriptions of Harmonikids projects are also available upon request and at [www.harmonikids.org](http://www.harmonikids.org).*

