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MEDIA RELEASE

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Parkview Middle School Teacher Spends Spring Break Helping Haitians

Ashwaubenon, WI – April 22, 2010 –Theresa Charapata, a sixth grade teacher at Ashwaubenon’s Parkview Middle School, spent her Spring Break in Haiti helping the Haitians recover from the devastating January earthquake. Prior to going to Haiti, where she taught, set up tents and provided meals, Ms. Charapata led the collection of donations from Parkview Middle School to the Haitian Helping Haitian Organization (HHHO).

Parkview donations to HHHO, amounting to more than \$1,000.00, included school supplies and funds to purchase tents, food and clothing for orphaned children. These donations were raised by students, staff and parents staff through lollipop sales, coin collection boxes and Parkview’s ‘Casual (Fridays) for a Cause’ program.

According to Charapata, “Many children lost their parents, siblings and other extended family members as a result of the earthquake so, listening to their heart-wrenching stories left the other volunteers and myself emotionally exhausted. We witnessed the Haitians digging out of the rubble shovel by shovel, handful by handful. In the U.S., we would have cranes and dump trucks to remove the rubble, but not in Haiti where such equipment is a very limited luxury.” Charapata took plenty of photos but feels they do not tell the whole story. She finds herself still trying to process everything and get acclimated back to the American way of life. She said, “I know that I will be changed for forever because of my time spent in Haiti. I want to thank everyone for their support and generosity – it made a great difference to the Haitians.”

Haiti is approximately 700 miles off the coast of Florida with a population of about 8.3 million people. This amount of people living in a land area about the size of Maryland makes Haiti the most densely populated country in the Western Hemisphere. The Haitians are mostly of African origin and speak primarily Kreyol (Creole) and French. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with an average life expectancy of fifty-two years and an unemployment rate of fifty percent. Approximately half of the adults cannot read or write since only a few children can afford to attend school. Eighty percent of the people live in poverty while ninety percent do not have clean drinking water. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

For more information, please contact Theresa Charapata, Parkview Middle School 6th Grade Teacher, at 920-492-2945 extension 4107 or tcharapata@ashwaubenon.k12.wi.us.

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