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## **Amid Crisis in Haiti, St. David's Foundation CEO Earl Maxwell Reminds Austin Donors of Urgent, Ongoing Local Needs**

*Keynote address at YMCA of Austin's Partner of Youth Campaign Kickoff aims to inspire more than 300 volunteers to surpass \$885,000 goal*

AUSTIN – As Austin-area charities gear up for their annual fundraising efforts, they do so against a backdrop of major catastrophe in Haiti. But the leader of one of Austin's top charitable foundations has a vital message for them: The needs of Austin are still urgent and ongoing.

**Earl Maxwell, CEO of the St. David's Foundation**, will be discussing the positive impacts of local organizations and offering keys to fundraising success to more than 300 YMCA of Austin volunteers on Tuesday, January 26, at 8 a.m., as they gather for the 2010 YMCA Partner of Youth Campaign (POY) kickoff event at the East Communities YMCA, located at 5315 Ed Bluestein Blvd.

"We recognize the challenges we face in trying to raise funds today, but the encouraging message is that giving in the Austin community is actually increasing," Maxwell said. "Our neighbors care, and they stand ready to respond to the needs both internationally and in our local community."

In his keynote, entitled "Growing Up at the YMCA," Maxwell will share insights on:

- **The importance of articulating your organization's impact.** Draw from personal experience and relay a personal story or the story of someone you know, highlighting the organization's impact on a person's life. When you put a human face on your "ask," you'll find it is easy for people to understand the importance of their involvement.
- **Reminding potential donors how urgent the need is now.** In a down economy, demands placed upon nonprofits increase dramatically. Campaigners are not just asking for money, they are offering an opportunity for the contributor to change lives.
- **Believing in abundance.** We live in a generous community, and there is more than enough to go around.

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YMCA campaigners will be working to raise more than \$885,000 during the 10-week campaign. POY funds enable the YMCA to provide financial assistance to deserving children and families so they can participate in YMCA programs, regardless of their ability to afford the fee.

In 2009, the YMCA of Austin provided more than \$1.7 million in financial assistance to more than 30,000 children and individuals. In light of the recession's ongoing effects, the YMCA is anticipating an even greater demand for assistance in 2010.

"I grew up at a YMCA in Houston and benefited from a scholarship, so I know first-hand the impact that the Y can have on the life of a child," Maxwell said. "The lessons learned there about the importance of developing your whole self – spirit, mind and body – are lessons that have guided me throughout my entire life."

Contributors to the POY Campaign help the YMCA provide a wide range of programs and activities for families who cannot afford the cost. Programs supported by POY funds include:

- Swimming lessons
- Afterschool Child Care
- Summer Day Camp
- Youth Sports
- Health and fitness programs for youths and adults
- YMCA memberships

The impact also extends far beyond the YMCA as well, enabling the Y to collaborate with many other community organizations by providing facilities, programs and services at no cost or reduced cost.

"At the core of all YMCA programs lies the belief that we're all in this together," said James Finck, YMCA of Austin President and CEO. "That's why financial aid is available to make YMCA programs and services available to all members of the community."

Finck said that while meeting peoples' basic needs is always a concern, the services provided by the YMCA can be just as critical.

"Different people have different needs," he said. "And for some, having affordable child care or a place to perform rehabilitative exercise can be just as urgent as the local food bank for their daily well-being."

Contributions to the YMCA of Austin Partner of Youth fund are accepted year-round. Persons interested in contributing campaign can visit [www.austinyymca.org](http://www.austinyymca.org) or call YMCA Financial Development Director Marion Martin at 322-9622 x34.

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