

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES EXPERIENCING BUREAUCRATIC CRISIS IN HAITI**

*-Aslan pleads for Haitian Finance Minister to overrule Port Cap-Haitien Customs Office, which is attempting to extort \$22,000 from New Jersey non-profit-*

June 21, 2011 (Red Bank, New Jersey) – Aslan Youth Ministries, a grassroots non-profit founded in Monmouth County, New Jersey in 1975, is encountering a major obstacle to delivering its medical clinic to L’Acajou, Haiti.

After being told the three containers that comprise Aslan’s medical clinic could clear customs at Port Cap-Haitien for \$3,750-\$4,500, **Haitian authorities demanded Aslan CEO Craig Bogard pay \$22,000**. After June 24, Aslan will begin incurring storage charges at Port Cap-Haitien (reportedly at \$180 per day).

Since 1996, Aslan volunteers have traveled to Ouanaminthe, Haiti to conduct intensive community service and mission work. Aslan volunteers distribute food, medical supplies, eyeglasses, and toiletries, conduct building projects and repairs, operate a summer camp, and develop critical on-the-ground relationships with the Haitian people.

Aslan’s volunteer team includes registered nurses and nurse practitioners who administer lifesaving medical care to hundreds of Haitian children and adults. Other volunteers are impoverished youth from Asbury Park, Long Branch, and Red Bank, New Jersey, who are served locally by Aslan.

In 2004, Aslan completed the purchase of five acres of land in L’Acajou, about two miles outside Ouanaminthe. Volunteers travel to the property regularly, on a year-round basis.

After the horrific 2010 earthquake, residents from New Jersey and throughout the United States made donations to Aslan in recognition of its ongoing, on-the-ground work in Haiti. **Aslan received nearly \$120,000 in relief funding – enabling Aslan to proceed with its long-term dream of building a medical clinic on its L’Acajou property.**

For the past several months, Aslan has partnered with Hospitals of Hope in Wichita, Kansas. On Aslan’s behalf, and with beautiful craftsmanship, Hospitals of Hope transformed three 40’ long by 8’ wide by 9.5’ high steel containers into a state-of-the-art medical clinic.

**The clinic units were shipped in three containers from Wichita to Miami to Cap-Haitien, Haiti, arriving on June 9.** From there, the units were to be taken by truck to Aslan’s property in L’Acajou, where they will be off-loaded by crane onto the foundation built by Aslan volunteers.

Five volunteers from New Jersey will take charge of connecting the clinic units into one building and unpacking all the equipment. Once these tasks are completed, Aslan will be thrilled to welcome its volunteer medical team from the United States and prepare the clinic for Haitian patients.

At this point, with the completion of the clinic units, Aslan will have spent the full \$120,000 donated by Americans – whereas most donations made to large organizations have not reached Haiti. **Unfortunately, Aslan has encountered a major setback with the Haitian government.**

Since the medical clinic units arrived in Cap-Haitien on June 9, Aslan's Haitian employees and attorney have worked tirelessly with Bogard to clear the containers through customs.

Bogard traveled personally to Port Cap-Haitian to arrange for the units to be released so they could be trucked to L'Acajou and delivered to Aslan's property there. Up until this point, the requirement and amount of a customs duty was unknown. Aslan's Board of Directors provided an emergency approval for Bogard to proceed with the expenditure.

Due to the expenditure, some improvements at the L'Acajou property (i.e., completing a masonry wall) may need to be deferred until Aslan raises additional funds. However, Aslan's Board recognized the emergent nature of the situation.

After June 24, Aslan will begin incurring storage charges at the port (estimated at \$180 per day). Bogard reports that the clinic units, in the condition in which they were shipped, are not as secure as they will be once they are in L'Acajou and under Aslan's control.

**Shockingly, after Aslan was told the duties payable to release the clinic from Port Cap-Haitien would be \$3,750-\$4,500, Haitian authorities now are demanding \$22,000.**

According to Aslan Executive Director Doug Eagles, "Aslan is outraged by this flagrant abuse of power over an American non-profit attempting to open a medical clinic in Haiti - on land it has owned legally for seven years. Aslan's medical clinic literally will save thousands of lives in Haiti, from chronic but preventable conditions as well as life-threatening illnesses that are routinely cured in the United States with simple antibiotics or common treatments.

"Any pressure that our American supporters can put on the Haitian government would be greatly appreciated by Aslan, as we strive to help children in need and the poorest of the poor."

For additional information on Aslan's needs in Haiti, please call [732-741-7824](tel:732-741-7824) or visit [aslanyouth.org](http://aslanyouth.org).

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