



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Valparaiso University Teams Up With Reggae Artist Taj Weekes' Children's Charity, They Often Cry Outreach (TOCO), To Launch the "Sneakers Not Wheelchairs" Campaign

Valparaiso University's Mens Soccer Team supports TOCO HEALTH with a fundraiser to launch They Often Cry Outreach's "Sneakers Not Wheelchairs" Campaign at their season home opener game on Sunday, September 6th in Valparaiso, Indiana.

New York, NY - August 21, 2009 - Indiana's **Valparaiso University** men's soccer team has joined forces with St. Lucian reggae artist **Taj Weekes** and his children's charity, **They Often Cry Outreach (TOCO)**, to launch the "**Sneakers Not Wheelchairs**" campaign - a public health initiative targeting the diabetes crisis in St. Lucia. Valparaiso will host the fundraiser during their season home opener game against the University of Michigan on September 6, 2009 at 6:00 pm.

Valpo men's soccer coaches, **Andy McCaslin** and **Jeff Oleck**, spearheaded the event in effort to raise funds for **TOCO HEALTH** to purchase supplies for a November mission trip to St. Lucia to introduce its "**Sneakers Not Wheelchairs**" campaign. November is recognized around the world as **Diabetes Awareness Month** and **TOCO's** mission trip will bring blood glucose meters, test strips, educational and nutritional materials as well as several volunteer doctors to St. Lucia for a national health fair. The campaign has set a goal to get 5,000 school children to participate in the **Annual Diabetes Fun Walk** to promote health and exercise. Valpo and Michigan soccer enthusiasts are encouraged to make a donation to **TOCO**, knowing that they can enjoy supporting their favorite team while making a contribution to a worthy cause at the same time.

TOCO, a U.S. based not-for-profit organization founded by Taj Weekes, is dedicated to improving the lives of underprivileged, at-risk and orphaned children in the Caribbean through sport, enrichment, educational and wellness programs. **TOCO HEALTH's "Sneakers Not Wheelchairs"** campaign was initiated to address the growing diabetes epidemic in St. Lucia where there is reportedly an estimated two amputations per week due to diabetes-related illnesses. Many become shut-ins because they are wheelchair bound so the "**Sneakers Not Wheelchairs**" campaign encourages St. Lucians to get up, put on their sneakers and exercise rather than become part of this statistic. Alarmed by the escalating rate of diabetes in his homeland, Weekes saw a natural connection between the healthy exercise offered by playing soccer and its positive benefits in helping to prevent Type 2 diabetes amongst the youth.

For more information on They Often Cry Outreach, please visit: www.theyoftencryoutreach.org.

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