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Forever Families Through Adoption Delivers Joy to Children in the Dominican Republic

Fifty teddy bears donated to underprivileged children from two "Bateys"

Rye Brook, September 26, 2007. Joy and Michael Goldstein, who have dedicated their lives to delivering happiness to childless couples worldwide, were able to spread a little happiness recently to children in the Dominican Republic. Marta Moya-Goldenberg, CSW, a representative of FFTA, hand-delivered stuffed bears to fifty children under the age of seven who live in the impoverished communities of Chichigua and Cangrejo.

The bears were from among the hundreds stuffed with love and "hearts" by participants in an event honoring adoption at the Build-a-Bear Workshop in The Westchester. The local event, coordinated by the Goldsteins and _____, the manager of the store, was one of many held all across the country this summer. Build-a-Bear is slated to receive this year's "Friends in Adoption Award" at the Adoptive Parents Committee conference in November in recognition of the significant financial and operational support they lent to this nationwide event.

The communities of Chichigua and Cangrejo are two of the poorest "bateys" in the DR: homes are made of cardboard or big pieces of tin, their floors merely dirt. Stones are used as chairs, and most residents just sit outside on one all day in the DR's 100° heat, as there are no jobs to be had for the adults and no schools to attend for the children.

"These two communities represent the most abject poverty that you can imagine," noted Marta Moya-Goldenberg, the representative from FFTA who delivered the bears to the children. "There is no hope, nor future for these families and their little children."

"One of Michael and my primary motivations for starting the Forever Families Through Adoption was to get into a position to help children from the Dominican Republic," said Joy Goldstein, FFTA's Executive Director. "The need is so great there – the hopelessness so extreme – and no one seems to be paying attention."

"When Americans consider adopting a child from another country," added Michael, "they immediately focus on Russia, China, or other areas in the Pacific Rim. So although FFTA can help guide families through the process of adopting children from anywhere in the world, we have chosen to focus our in-house international adoption program on children from much closer to home."

"Before we opened FFTA, we were only able to encourage potential adoptive parents to focus their efforts on finding a child to adopt from the D.R.," explained Joy. "Now, as an agency, we are able to first identify the children in need of adoption, and then to actively seek good homes for them."

Marta concluded, "The teddy bears were a special blessing for the children and the parents... (Thanks to Joy and Michael, this year) they celebrated Christmas in August."

About Forever Families Through Adoption: *FFTA is a New York and Connecticut-authorized, not-for-profit, adoption placement agency founded on the belief that every child has the right to grow up in a loving, nurturing, secure, and forever home. Joy Goldstein is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who counsels birth and adoptive parents and frequently lectures on adoption topics. Michael is an attorney and social worker and assists clients with adoptions both domestically and internationally. After more than 25 years and over 2,500 successful placements, the Goldsteins founded FFTA in July of 2007.*