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## **Whole Child International to Expand Operations Throughout Nicaragua's Orphanages**

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**Managua, Nicaragua**—Whole Child International, a 501(c)(3) international aid organization based in Los Angeles, has completed a vital one-year pilot program in Managua, Nicaragua. Based on the initial successes of this program, **Whole Child is moving into full implementation beginning March 1, 2008.** This will expand its comprehensive program from one to a total of five orphanages within the next two months, expand to nine in Nicaragua by this coming September, for a goal of all 83 over a ten-year period. In neighboring El Salvador, the first three will be fully online within 2008.

### **— About Whole Child —**

Whole Child International is devoted to improving the lives of orphaned, abandoned, abused, and neglected children living in institutions worldwide. In line with basic child development principles and practices, the organization restructures existing orphanages, training administrators and caregivers and helping them through the transition from a factory-line approach to emotionally responsive caregiving. This simple and cost-effective program, with the backing of major universities and other prominent partners, has the power to significantly improve the lives of institutionalized children and reduce the subsequent burden on societies in every part of the world.

### **— Agreements with Nicaraguan and Salvadoran Governments —**

Midway through the 2007 pilot program, representatives of the Nicaraguan government visited the pilot site, Divino Niño children's home, in Managua. Based on their observations of the children, they immediately expanded Whole Child's mandate from its pilot scope to the country's entire 85-home system of care for parentless children. On February 22, the government of neighboring El Salvador followed with a request and formal agreement with Whole Child International to conduct its program in all of its children's homes as well. Following a formal signing ceremony in the spring, the organization will begin work in three initial orphanages in San Salvador.

### **— Significant Potential for Improvement in Outcomes for Parentless Children —**

Most major international organizations have explicit policies against working in institutions, leaving an urgent human need for Whole Child's highly focused, cost-effective, and culturally sensitive solution to one of the world's most entrenched problems. While orphanages typically provide adequate food and shelter, children who spend time in an institution remain subject to psychological damage that typically leads to acute attachment disorder and ultimately to unproductive lives characterized by incarceration, prostitution, suicide, and the creation of new generations of orphans. Whole Child's program directly targets the cause of this psychological damage — namely the systemic barriers to providing children with meaningful relationships. Thus Whole Child can focus on the essence of a childhood — for instance the act of changing a diaper, of feeding, and of bathing, and the simple freedom to move, play, and develop healthfully. By providing these essentials that seem so obvious, but that are nonetheless denied millions of parentless children, Whole Child can provide a child with the tools and the chance at becoming a functioning and even happy member of society.