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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fairfield County Community Foundation Awards \$10,000 Grant to International Institute to Assist Haitians

Funding will support emergency immigration assistance to Haitians living in Fairfield County prior to the January earthquake.

Bridgeport, CT, April 7, 2010 – Responding to the Haiti earthquake crisis of January 12, 2010, the **Fairfield County Community Foundation (FCCF)** has awarded the **International Institute of Connecticut (IIC)** **\$10,000** in funding to support emergency immigration assistance for those Haitian individuals already residing in Fairfield County, including those who may be eligible to apply for special permission (Temporary Protected Status – TPS) to remain in the U.S. until such time as the US and Haitian governments decide that it is safe and prudent to return to Haiti.

Arriving over the past three decades, a sizable Haitian community has come to call lower Fairfield County its home. In the days following the January 12th earthquake, the IIC was deluged with calls from members of the Haitian communities in Bridgeport and Stamford wanting to know whether they could apply to bring relatives over and/or whether Haitian nationals here could apply to remain in the U.S. In that same week, Congress extended Temporary Protected Status to those Haitians who were physically present in the U.S. at the time of the earthquake and therefore could not subsequently return to their devastated homeland.

The overarching goal of the IIC's project is to ensure that Haitians living in Fairfield County have access to affordable and professional immigration services and are aware of the newly enacted relief measures available to them, as well as opportunities to be reunited with family members stranded in Haiti.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations, and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation also provides philanthropic advisory services and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$110 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit www.fccfoundation.org.

The International Institute of Connecticut is a statewide, non-profit agency dedicated to the needs of immigrants, refugees, and their families. Recognized by the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals, the IIC assists hundreds of low income individuals a year in their applications and inquiries concerning U.S. citizenship and is the premier non-faith based, nonprofit entity providing affordable professional immigration services in the state of Connecticut. Working through four permanent offices located in Bridgeport, Stamford, Hartford, and Derby, as well as outreach operations throughout the state, the IIC supports and assists clients through the provision of material needs, direct professional services, counseling, advocacy, and the advancement of fair and humane public policy.

To schedule an appointment or ask a question, contact the IIC at: **(203) 336-0141**. To learn more about the IIC, go to www.iiconn.org.

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