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For More Information Contact:
Corets Communications at 425-652-2452

Professional Photography Industry Raises More Than \$100,000 to Aid Colleagues Devastated by Hurricane Katrina

LAS VEGAS, Nevada – Members of the photographic industry contributed over **\$100,000** to the **P.H.O.T.O. Foundation** (Photographic Industry Helping Others To Overcome) enabling the charitable organization to accomplish its mission of helping colleagues devastated by Hurricane Katrina get back on their feet.

Working at a breakneck pace, the P.H.O.T.O. Foundation formed within days of Hurricane Katrina striking the Gulf Coast. Support streamed in as industry members contributed cash, held fundraisers, donated equipment and helped publicize the cause. Within 12 weeks of the hurricane, dozens of displaced photographers applied for and received assistance – in many cases P.H.O.T.O. relief reached photographers before insurance companies and public agencies were able to respond to the overwhelming crisis.

The Foundation faced the difficult task of expediting disbursements and simultaneously reserving funds in anticipation of additional needs. In November 2005, P.H.O.T.O. distributed approximately \$70,000 to the initial round of grant applicants, and in December 2005 granted the remaining funds to a second round of applicants. Donations are hard at work rebuilding lives and helping make ends meet.

“It’s fitting that we share the good results of our joint efforts at WPPI and DWF because so many of the contributors and recipients, as well as all of the board members, are gathered here for this annual rite of spring,” said **Karyn Newman**, originator of the P.H.O.T.O. concept.

The numerous expressions of gratitude from grant recipients include these sentiments:

“You all have made a difference in our lives,” from a **Long Beach, Mississippi** photographer.

“This awful Katrina experience has been an eye opener in many ways...the support we received has been more than imaginable,” from a **Slidell, Louisiana** photographer.

“I will never forget what you have done for me and my business,” from a **Biloxi, Mississippi** photographer.

“You have made our lives a little better here and we thank you,” from a **New Orleans, Louisiana photographer**.

“Thank you so much for helping us rebuild our studio and our lives!” from a **Pascagoula, Mississippi photographer**.

“I know things will get better and it is very pleasing to know the photographic industry out there really cares,” from a **New Orleans, Louisiana photographer**.

Creation of the Foundation was inspired by a conversation between **Karyn Newman** of Zookbinders Inc. and **Neil Hurd**, owner of Neil Hurd Photography in Metairie, Louisiana. Newman called Hurd on August 31, 2005 to see if the photographer was safe. She learned firsthand how the Hurds evacuated safely, but lost everything in the aftermath. Hurd estimated it would take more than a year to rebuild his 27-year-old business. In the days that followed, stories like this were repeated over and over.

“Neil had just visited our facility a week before the hurricane,” said Newman. “After I talked to him I had to do something to help – we’re like family.” Newman took the initiative and enlisted the help of Zookbinders’ president **Mark Zucker**, Rangefinder Publishing’s president **Skip Cohen**, and Digital Wedding Forum’s founder **Jeff Caplan**.

“The industry’s tremendous response has been instrumental in making our promise of support a reality for our professional family,” commented **Mark Zucker**. “On behalf of the P.H.O.T.O. board, please accept our heartfelt thanks.”

The needs of impacted colleagues are still significant and the Foundation is still accepting contributions. Send checks to P.H.O.T.O. Foundation, PO Box 611, Deerfield, IL 60015 or visit www.photofoundation.net to contribute online.

The P.H.O.T.O. Foundation is registered as a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Illinois. The organization’s 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is pending approval. The Foundation’s board members include: Jeff Caplan of Digital Wedding Forum, Skip Cohen of Rangefinder Publishing, and Karyn Newman and Mark Zucker of Zookbinders.

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