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NON-PROFIT 'THE WORLD IS JUST A BOOK AWAY' LAUNCHES TEN NEW LIBRARIES JUNE 3RD IN SIDOARJO, IND.

LIBRARIES NAMED IN HONOR OF SUPPORTERS THAT INCLUDE QUEEN NOOR AL-HUSSEIN, JANE GOODALL, YO-YO MA, AND NATASHA RICHARDSON

ALUMNI USC CLUB OF INDONESIA RAISES OVER \$25,000 FOR ORGANIZATION

Los Angeles, CA, USA (May 2009) – Non-profit organization *The World Is Just A Book Away* (*TWIJABA*) launched in October 2008, is already exceeding its 2009 expectations by opening ten libraries at ten schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, on June 3-4, 2009. The libraries will service approximately 2,000 children in the area, grades one through six. Founder James J. Owens is proud to announce that the libraries will be named in honor of key *TWIJABA* supporters, including Muhammad Yunus, Queen Noor Al-Hussein of Jordan, Desmond Tutu, Yo-Yo Ma, Miep Gies, and the late actress Natasha Richardson.

The mission of *The World Is Just A Book Away* (www.JustABookAway.com) is to bring hope—in the form of books, libraries, and schools—to thousands of children in developing countries. The program was launched in Sidoarjo, site of the mudflow disaster that displaced more than 60,000 people and destroyed many schools. The ten libraries introduce the idea of loaning non-classroom books for recreational reading. The libraries also have educational DVDs for on-site use.

The organization has accomplished early fundraising success across various platforms: a strong online push (primarily through Facebook), an art opening fundraiser sponsored by Los Angeles Tribal, and, most significantly, both a dedicated Board, and being the beneficiary of the Alumni USC Club of Indonesia's annual Charity Ball. The Ball raised over \$30,000 for *TWIJABA*, and the club plans to work with the non-profit and its local partner to distribute books to Indonesian children in impoverished areas of the country.

With an initial goal in 2009 to open 14 libraries, Owens is grateful for the immense support, and in awe of the accelerated progress that has been achieved. "When we launched last October, we thought it would be a stretch to launch 14 libraries in Sidoarjo in 2009," states Owens, assistant professor of clinical management communication at the USC Marshall School of Business Center for Management Communication. "However, due to our early success and the tremendous support of all involved, we will open ten in June and we are on target to open a total of 20 permanent libraries there this year, as well as a mobile library to serve children at an additional 23 schools. In total, we will bring more than 15,000 books to more than 9,000 boys and girls in the region who have been most affected by the mudflow disaster in 2009, our first full year of operation."

TWIJABA has attracted a strong and varied list of people to its cause, from Board members to general supporters. Owens wanted to honor a selection of early believers (not on the Board) by naming a library after them. Confirmed library names include Queen Noor Al-Hussein, Desmond Tutu, Jane Goodall, Lois and Buzz Aldrin, Shirin Ebadi (2003 Nobel Peace Prize), Yo-Yo Ma, Miep Gies, Muhammad Yunus, Fess Parker, and the Natasha Richardson Memorial Library.

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Behind the scenes, the first person to commit to the organization's Board of Advisors was Jenny Ming, former President of Old Navy and one of *Fortune* magazine's "50 Most Powerful Women in American Business." Rounding out the Board of Advisors are Jim Ellis, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business, and Tim Monich, highly-respected dialect coach of Hollywood. Prominent people in the worlds of business, entertainment and academia have signed on to the Board as well, inspired by Owens' enthusiasm, drive, mission, and their own love of the written word.

Owens also enlisted the help of students and young professionals for the non-profit, when he encountered their enthusiasm for the project. As a professor, he wants to encourage the idea that being on a Board shouldn't be restricted to the over 40 age group. So *TWIJABA's* Board has members in their 30s, and he created the "Ambassadors" program as a stepping stone for the younger participants.

Owens is also working on a book featuring submissions from more than 70 of the world's most prominent people—across the arts and sciences, politics, business, and philanthropy—about their love of reading and books that inspired them. He plans to donate all the profits from the future book sales to non-profits, including *TWIJABA*.

Images of the building or renovation progress on the libraries can be viewed online at www.justabookaway.com.

ADDITIONAL *TWIJABA* NEWS:

- March 2009—Professor Owens attended *Education Without Borders 2009 Conference* in Dubai, UAE, as a Distinguished Guest and Mentor, and Panel Judge. Participating panel: "Improving Technology's Role in Improving Life on Earth".
- In November 2008, "The World is Just a Book Away 20/20 Club" launched on Facebook to garner broader support from the general public. Each member commits to an annual minimum donation of \$20 (which translates into 20 books). In the first two months, nearly 200 signed up, and almost \$10,000 was raised.

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