

## **JustWorld International Rider representatives visit project site in Honduras**

Wellington, Florida – The first delegation of JustWorld Rider Representatives have returned from visiting a JustWorld International project site in Honduras. JustWorld International is a not-for-profit, humanitarian organization founded to prepare and empower students to become visionary leaders and work for social justice by assisting orphans and underprivileged children.

On February 14, a nine-member delegation that included Rider Representatives Angela Covert-Lawrence, Titi Mills and Ray Texel, departed for a five-day trip to Honduras where they witnessed firsthand the difference their donated prize money is making in the lives of the children that JustWorld International seeks to help.

The nine individuals spent the first evening at Titi Mills' farm, El Molino, which is the future site of the JustWorld International Center. The Minister of Tourism, Mr. Thierry de Pierrefeu, as well as directors and affiliates representing JustWorld International's local partner organizations, joined the group.

During their stay, the delegation members visited orphanages and educational centers where JustWorld International contributions are funding valuable programs, as well as the city garbage dump where hundreds of Honduran children are forced to look for food and anything that can be resold for money. JustWorld volunteers are currently developing programs for this specific group of children with the goal of giving them other choices in life.

"What struck me the most about our visit to the garbage dump was meeting a beautiful six-year-old girl, barefoot and dirty in this horrific place, and wondering why was she here?" stated Matthieu Nassif, a member of 'The Flying Frenchmen' entertainment troupe that has performed for the benefit of JustWorld International. "This life without hope, without a future, is so inconceivable to us. If we want to help these children and change their lives, we must first change ourselves."

At the Honduran Institute for Children and Families (IHNFA), a government-run center for children, the JustWorld representatives had the opportunity to interact and play with the children, all of whom had been found living in the streets or were taken away from abusive homes. At this site, both international and Honduran JustWorld volunteers are implementing JustWorld International-funded activities and programs to help the children develop vital life skills. Without these activities, the children would spend 23 hours of each day locked up in dormitories with nothing to do.

"To go to the project sites and the garbage dump and to see the conditions firsthand reaffirms my belief and commitment to humanitarian work," said Ray Texel, who was the first individual to become a JustWorld Rider Representative. "The process is slow, but without a long-term commitment, nothing will change. It is always easier to turn away, to turn a blind eye and not have to deal with it. But the human condition is something everyone is responsible for. If everyone took on that responsibility, the world could improve. We are all on a quest to be successful individually, but there is no reason we can't be successful together as well. You can't save everyone, but you can save one at a time and that is enough for me."

His sentiments were echoed by Angela Covert-Lawrence of St-Lazare, Canada, who said, "The children that are in the JustWorld-supported programs are so much happier; it makes such a difference to them. Most of these children literally have nothing, and the interest we are taking in them gives them so much self-confidence and hope. I was impressed by this aspect, and feel that it is essential for these programs to succeed and be sustainable. We all know that extreme poverty exists, but when you see the situations firsthand, you feel a greater urgency to contribute. After this experience, I am encouraged by the transparency within this organization, and the fact that the funds are being handled so responsibly. The futures of many children and families are so much brighter because of JustWorld International's involvement."

Perhaps the hardest thing for the delegation members to understand was the stark contrast between the living conditions in Honduras and those in Florida.

“It was definitely an eye-opener,” said Tim Boulton, an adult amateur hunter and jumper competitor as well as the assistant to Gene Mische of Stadium Jumping. “I didn’t know what to expect leaving Wellington, and I quickly found out that Honduras is a completely different world. I realized that our horses live in conditions several hundred times better than these children. Coming home, every little thing has bothered me. I am angry that there is so much waste here when there are all these poor, sick children in Honduras that have nothing. It has been hard to find a balance since I’ve been home.”

The nine participants included Tim Boulton, Angela Covert-Lawrence and her husband, Mike Lawrence, Ray Texel, Andre Jacques Le Goupil of France, Titi Mills who is a native of Honduras, Matthieu Nassif of France, JustWorld International Executive Director Jessica Newman, and amateur competitor Denise Quirk.

“It was an amazing trip, and it was truly emotional,” noted Executive Director Jessica Newman, who sacrificed her own grand prix career in order to devote her time to JustWorld International. “For the first time, I was able to share the experiences that changed my life with my fellow equestrians and friends. Everyone became very close during the five days we spent together, sharing this unique experience. Now I feel that several fellow equestrians understand my conviction and why I gave up my equestrian career. Nothing is more satisfying and meaningful than being able to give hundreds and thousands of underprivileged, suffering children a chance for a brighter future. To see the changes and evolution of these kids every time I return to Honduras makes my heart smile and motivates me even more! The dynamic of this group was wonderful, as everyone represents JustWorld International in different capacities, and everyone was deeply moved by their experience in Honduras. I am so happy that everyone came back determined to do everything in their own power to help advance the work of JustWorld International.”

JustWorld International Rider Representatives include Angela Covert of Canada, Kevin Babington of Ireland, Christophe Barbeau of Switzerland, Marcus Fuchs of Switzerland, Herve Godignon of France, Imke Hofschroer of Germany, Eric Lamaze of Canada, Rutherford Latham of Spain, Olivier Guillon of France, Candice King of the United States, Titi Mills of Honduras, Eric Navet of France, Ludo Philippaerts of Belgium, Ray Texel of the United States, and Gregory Wathélet of Belgium. Through various initiatives, including donating a portion of their prize money or giving clinics to benefit JustWorld International, riders are able to support the organization’s projects and programs.

Founded in 2002, JustWorld International offers internship programs for students from around the globe to learn leadership skills and acquire the tools necessary to make a positive difference in the world. With three project sites located in Cambodia, Honduras and Senegal, students are working for change in a wide variety of environments on behalf of JustWorld International. For further information on JustWorld International, please visit [www.justworldinternational.org](http://www.justworldinternational.org)

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