Photography Exhibit “Safe Passage” Provides Local, Global and Timely Perspective on Childhood in the Developing World

Richmond, Va. – Richmond-based photographer Jake Lyell will debut a series of photos during today’s First Fridays art walk, the monthly celebration that spans more than 30 downtown galleries. The photo exhibition, titled “Safe Passage,” depicts challenges of life in developing countries while inviting viewers into the daily life of the children who live there – fetching water from the community tap, learning at school or taking turns on a makeshift wooden scooter.

Lyell is a VCU graduate specializing in visual storytelling for international development organizations. He captured most of these images while on assignment for the Richmond-based ChildFund International, a child-focused global organization that works in 25 developing countries and in the U.S. to protect children and improve their well-being. A reception to kick off the photo exhibition will take place later today at the Richmond Public Library, Main Branch, 101 E. Franklin St., from 6:30-9:00 p.m. and is open to the public.

“This exhibit has special significance not only because both ChildFund and the photographer, Jake Lyell, have Richmond roots, but also because the photos help people understand the enormous struggles that people face around the world,” said Anne Lynam Goddard, President and CEO of ChildFund.

The photographs, on display through Sept. 4, feature children from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Lyell, who began documenting humanitarian efforts after volunteering in Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Tanzania, marries his photography skills with a humanitarian focus. His favorite photograph on display shows two young boys at a refugee camp in Rwanda, riding a scooter made of wood, with tents in the background.

“ChildFund International helps provide safe passage in the figurative sense, for children beginning in their earliest years, into youth and adulthood without the need to cross literal borders,” said Lyell. “My goal is to allow the viewer to imagine a childhood lived with severe hardships and inequalities. I also wish to show that practical solutions to these issues do exist if we’re willing to put resources into addressing them.”

First Fridays, organized by the Downtown Neighborhood Association, is a monthly celebration of arts, artists and RVA. Every first Friday of the month, Richmond’s best art galleries open new shows and their doors to artists, fans and friends. The event, which often features live performances, takes place in the Richmond Arts District, with dozens of galleries, restaurants and shops also participating.

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About Jake Lyell
Jake Lyell has filmed and photographed in more than 60 different countries for humanitarian organizations, editorial publications and corporations making an impact in the developing world. Jake is
an artistic visual storyteller, whether working on assignment as an individual or with members of his network of creative professionals. His photographs offer an intimate and compassionate glimpse into the lives of people facing poverty and inequality around the globe. Learn more at jakelyell.com.

About ChildFund International partners with communities throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas – including the United States – to create lasting, positive change for children. Our programs address the underlying conditions that prevent children and youth from achieving their full potential. Last year, we reached 11.4 million children and family members. Approximately 200,000 Americans support our work by sponsoring individual children or investing in ChildFund programs. Find out more at www.ChildFund.org.