



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ChildFund, AmeriCares Provide Water to Reopen Schools in
Oaks Community, Okla.**

Richmond, Va. – Aug. 17, 2011 – In the midst of record high temperatures and no water since late July, ChildFund and AmeriCares have worked alongside the community of Oaks, Okla., to reopen schools by getting desperately needed water to children and their communities.

“Normally, we don’t think of children going thirsty because they lack drinking water in America,” says Rukhsana Ayyub, national director for ChildFund’s U.S. program. “But there is a severe drought in Oklahoma, and no water in some parts of the state, which is preventing children from going to school.”

The town of Oaks, a small rural community in northeastern Oklahoma, has been without water since July 27, when the community’s water source ran bone dry. Oaks Public School was scheduled to start on Aug. 8, but a lack of water has delayed the start of school. ChildFund has been working in Oklahoma since 1952 and has partnered with the local Boys and Girls Club for the past 19 years; together they are responding to this current water crisis.

On Aug. 12, three pallets of drinking water donated by AmeriCares was delivered by ChildFund and local Boys and Girls Club staff to Oaks Public School. Non-potable water for bathroom facilities was restored to the school with limited pressure. School is now set to open today, Wednesday, Aug. 17. Limited municipal water supplies have been restored in some areas but are not of drinking quality, needing to be boiled and filtered before drinking.

“We were down to a little over two pallets of water for the community when the ChildFund water arrived,” says Elaine True, a teacher at Oaks Public School and a volunteer tutor at the local Boys and Girls Club. “The water that ChildFund and AmeriCares was able to send will allow the families to not have to worry about where their drinking water is going to come from. We have already taken pallets of water to the school; which can now start Wednesday.”

In addition, three pallets of drinking water was donated to Oaks Mission for Kids, one pallet of drinking water was donated to the local Boys and Girls Club and the remaining 35 pallets of water are being stored at the Oaks Volunteer Fire Department building, where families are able to obtain two cases of drinking water, as needed.

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The entire Oaks community has pulled together to respond to its own crisis, from a local farmer donating a forklift to help move water pallets, to children helping in the distribution of much needed water. In addition, community members are delivering water to those who lack transportation or are physically unable to collect water at the fire station.

The drought continues in the midst of record high temperatures of more than 100 degrees, which is expected to continue for several weeks. The entire state has been under an excessive heat advisory. The risk of infection and disease has increased with the lack of water for sanitation purposes. ChildFund plans to work with the community and AmeriCares to distribute sanitation supplies in the coming weeks along with information on hygiene and health care.

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About ChildFund:



bbb.org/charity

ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 15.2 million children and their family members in 31 countries. For more than 70 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. To sponsor a child in need, visit the ChildFund website.

About AmeriCares:

AmeriCares is a nonprofit global health and disaster relief organization which delivers medicines, medical supplies and aid to people in need around the world and across the United States. Since it was established in 1982, AmeriCares has distributed more than \$10 billion in humanitarian aid to 147 countries. For more information, visit www.AmeriCares.org.