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Long Branch Resident Tony Costa Given Silver President's Volunteer Service Award for African Charity Involvement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(HOLMDEL, N. J. – JUNE 15, 2011) – In the course of our day to day lives, 350 hours may not seem like much. But for Tony Costa it's worth its weight in silver. That's because the Long Branch resident has just been presented with a silver President's Volunteer Service Award for volunteering 350+ hours to Holmdel-based charity, Sylvia's Children.

Costa, a trustee for the organization, logged the hours while volunteering his time on various projects for Sylvia's Children, both in New Jersey and in Uganda, where the charity does most of its work. Sylvia's Children was founded in 2003 by Sylvia Allen, and seeks to better the lives of the over 1,001 children living in the village of Mbirizi. One third have been left orphaned by the AIDS pandemic.

Costa received the award after qualifying for the 2010 Spirit Hours Honor Roll, an initiative of Bank of America's award-winning Community Volunteers, a certifying organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award, presented by the White House each year.

"Thank you for all you are doing to set opportunity in motion for the people in your community, and to help those with whom you work achieve their dreams," said Brian Moynihan, Chief Executive Officer of Bank of America, in a letter to Costa.

In a letter from President Barack Obama, it states: "Thank you for helping to address the most pressing needs in your community and our country...Your volunteer service demonstrates the kind of commitment to your community that moves America a step closer to its great promise."

Over the past eight years, Sylvia's Children has raised a staggering \$400,000, all of which has gone directly to the village's Advanced Primary and Day Care School, and its 1,001 children. It has built a fresh well and a fully stocked library; purchased seven acres of land which it has used to build a corn milling business; donated Internet-equipped computers; constructed a dormitory with triple-decker bunk beds; built a playground; provided sporting and musical equipment; and built three additional double classroom blocks as well as providing a full-time nurse and new stoves for increased cooking efficiency.

It has also brought over a team of American doctors, nurses and dentists, all of who have worked to treat and even save the lives of dying children.

The mission of Sylvia's Children is to create a self-sustaining model in African entrepreneurship, based on Social Capitalism, which can then be provided to schools in surrounding villages. Allen's near-future plans are to finish the model with a chicken farm, a uniform sewing trade, a computer center, an arts and crafts cooperative, a women's cooperative and a medical clinic, which will all allow the school to be completely self-sustainable.

For more information on Sylvia's Children, visit www.sylviaschildren.org.

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