



FEBRUARY 29, 2012

Contact: Jim Fiolek, Executive Director
Jim@sbcountywines.com

SANTA BARBARA VINTNERS RAISE RECORD AMOUNT FOR DIRECT RELIEF INTERNATIONAL

– \$500,000 donation to be leveraged into over \$15 million worth of relief –

SANTA YNEZ, CA – The Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation celebrated leap year in a very big way by presenting a check for \$500,000 to Direct Relief International on February 29 at the Hitching Post II restaurant in Buellton. The money was raised at the Foundation's biennial event, The American Riviera Wine Auction, held in Santa Barbara at the Four Seasons Biltmore's Coral Casino on February 11, 2012. "Hitting the half-million dollar mark represents a huge leap for all of us," noted Frank Ostini, President of the Vintners' Foundation, adding, "The \$500,000 raised here will be leveraged by Direct Relief into \$15 million in medicine and aid to the needy across the United States and around the world, which makes the Vintners so proud to be in partnership with Direct Relief for the American Riviera Wine Auction."

As the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association's charitable "arm," the Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation has now collaborated with Direct Relief on seven American Riviera Wine Auctions since 2000. The first six auctions enabled the Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation to gift \$1.6 million toward the work of Direct Relief. This year's check, which represents a 50% increase from any past auction, brings the total contribution to over \$2 million. The year of that first auction, Direct Relief, who had been supplying medical supplies to clinics and hospitals around the world for 50 years, faced a financial shortfall of \$100,000 that threatened its future. When the Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation presented Direct Relief with \$250,000 from the proceeds of the first auction, it not only relieved Direct Relief's immediate financial crisis but launched them toward their present platform which allows them to deliver \$300 million yearly.

(more)

PO Box 1558 Santa Ynez, CA 93460
OFC. 805.688.0881/805.686.5881 FAX
www.sbcountywines.com



While Direct Relief's initial relief efforts targeted medically underserved areas internationally, in response to the need arising in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, DRI was able to translate their successful overseas model to a domestic situation. A realization that the need for affordable medicine at home transcended Hurricane Katrina, Direct Relief has since launched Direct Relief USA and now supplies \$50 million yearly on the home front, including millions of dollars for dental and ophthalmic care as well as the distribution of relief packs for emergency responders in Santa Barbara County.

Members of the press were invited to the check presentation ceremony at the Hitching Post II and was followed by a complimentary lunch. For more information on the Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation and the American Riviera Wine Auction go to www.sbcountywines.com/events/auction.html .

###

PO Box 1558 Santa Ynez, CA 93460
OFC. 805.688.0881/805.686.5881 FAX
www.sbcountywines.com