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Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, American Library Association and partners raise \$28,000 for Haiti relief over weekend

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) and the American Library Association (ALA) have announced a joint donation of \$28,584.50 to support relief efforts in Haiti. The effort was set up in less than 24 hours by the two groups after the deadly quake on Jan. 14. Donations were made by many of the 13,000 attendees at the ALA 2010 Midwinter Meeting in Boston over the weekend, and were matched dollar for dollar by the MCCA. Massachusetts State Representative Linda Dorcena Forry, the second Haitian-American to be elected to state office in Massachusetts, received the donation on behalf of the local Haitian community. MCCA contract partners also contributed to the fund, including Allied Security, Unicco, Save That Stuff!, Priority Parking and Projection.

“Several members of our staff lost family in the earthquake,” said James E. Rooney, Executive Director of the MCCA. “We wanted to respond with immediate humanitarian support, and helping ALA attendees to respond individually doubled these efforts.”

Boston is home to the third largest community of Haitians outside of Haiti. “ALA has a long history of helping libraries rebuild after natural disasters,” said Camila Alire, president of ALA. “But being able to donate personally to relief efforts while in Boston has a special poignancy. We are proud to be working with the MCCA in promoting these efforts.”

The funds will be directed to credible organizations based in Boston working toward relief in Haiti, with a portion set aside for reconstruction of libraries in keeping with the mission of the American Library Association. While the extent of damage to the National Library of Haiti is still unknown, ALA is preparing to assist in the rebuilding efforts. ALA is modeling its work on efforts undertaken after the 2004 Tsunami and projects to rebuild and re-equip libraries following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. “Libraries not only provide access to information, they help preserve the cultural heritage of a people,” said Alire.

One of the core missions of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, which operates the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and the Hynes Convention Center in the Back Bay, is to give back to local communities. Because the tragedy in Haiti

impacted several MCCA staff, and because of the role Boston plays in Haiti's world community, this combined fundraising effort with the leadership and members of the ALA was a vital success.

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