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## **Food for the Hungry Empowers Children and Families to Improve Quality of Life and Relationships**

**PHOENIX (May 11, 2015)** – On May 15 the United Nations will celebrate International Day of Families, which recognizes the value of the nuclear family as a key societal building block. This year’s celebration will focus on gender equality and children’s rights in the contemporary family, a cause that [Food for the Hungry](#) (FH) is invested in worldwide, implemented through its child-focused community transformation model of operation.

Child sponsorship, a widely accepted method for creating lasting change, is one tool FH uses to promote children’s value in their communities and to empower them to upward mobility through education and personal growth. Key to the program’s success are healthy families and strong communities.

Currently, there are more than 80,000 children in FH’s child sponsorship program, in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

“When families begin to thrive, entire communities see a transformation: relationally and economically,” said Gary Edmonds, FH president and CEO. “An individual family, changed for the better, has the power to affect the other families around them and become a catalyst for societal change.”

Through individual child sponsorships, FH works in communities around the world to strengthen families by improving nutrition, establishing educational assistance programs and providing access to clean water and medical care. In these communities, FH also provides parents with livelihood training, including improved agricultural practices to increase crop yields. Parents also join care groups to learn to better care for their children, and savings groups to learn literacy and financial management, and to save money together and provide low-interest loans for starting or improving businesses — all with the goal of helping children to thrive.

Esthefany a 10-year-old girl who lives in Cachi Alta, Peru was unmotivated to do her homework, felt discouraged at school, and had little interest in helping her mother with household chores or attending church. When FH entered her community in 2012, Esthefany gained a new sense of hope and motivation. As a sponsored child, she participated in a reading comprehension program. “Now, thanks to this program, I do all my homework and I’m more responsible at home and school, and I hope to be a good secretary after high school,” Esthefany says. “I also go to church with joy and love to sing songs together.”

The Universal Peace Federation, an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, explains that the cohesion and stability of the family are prerequisites for a healthy and stable society. Conversely, the breakdown of the family contributes to a wide range of social problems. By strengthening the family, we can build a stronger base of social capital that will enhance the overall quality of life for everyone. “The impact of child sponsorship on children in at risk communities cannot be underestimated,” said Edmonds. “A small investment in the life of one child can bring hope and change to her family and to the community.”

Those who sponsor children through FH are encouraged to build a relationship with the sponsored child through letters. These relationships often give sponsors a new perspective, that ending poverty is less about owning things and more about inspiring hope. Child sponsorships also give sponsors who are parents a unique way to encourage their own children to think beyond themselves and help others. The cost to sponsor a child is \$35 per month. For more information on the child sponsorship program, visit [FH.org](http://FH.org).

### **About Food for the Hungry**

Founded in 1971, [Food for the Hungry](http://FoodfortheHungry) provides emergency relief and long-term development programs with operations in more than 20 countries to help the world's most vulnerable people. Learn more by visiting [fh.org](http://fh.org). Social connections include [facebook.com/foodforthehungry](https://facebook.com/foodforthehungry) and [twitter.com/food4thehungry](https://twitter.com/food4thehungry).

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