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4300 Marsh Ridge Road • Suite 114 • Carrollton, TX 75010
972.267.1111 • 972.267.3535 (fax) • www.alarryross.com

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Julie Shultz 972.267.1111
julie@alarryross.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RESTORING HOPE THROUGH WHEELCHAIRS AND RETREATS:

**Joni and Friends Mix Optimism, Success and Vision to
Provide Fresh Outlook for Disabled Community**

AGOURA HILLS, Calif., Dec. 28, 2009 – Hope restored is the most rewarding benefit people have received this year through the Joni and Friends (JAF) disability ministry. Through refurbished wheelchairs in the Wheels for the World program to refreshed families in the Family Retreats, JAF provides hope in situations that were once seen as hopeless.

Without a wheelchair, many of the estimated 700 million disabled people in the world are imprisoned by their surroundings. Prior to receiving their wheelchairs through Wheels for the World, many disabled people are unable to leave their beds, or are either carried or crawl to move around. This year, JAF provided wheelchairs and Bibles to individuals in more than 20 countries, including Poland, Romania and Thailand. JAF implemented Wheels for the World in 1994, with 125 wheelchairs in an outreach to Ghana, West Africa.

“We’ve been restoring and refurbishing wheelchairs for years. JAF has been recycling and economizing at every turn and doing it long before our culture started ‘going green,’” said Joni Eareckson Tada, founder of JAF, herself a quadriplegic for more than 40 years.

Since 1991, more than 6,000 families affected by disability have been strengthened and restored through JAF Family Retreats. With the 2008 addition of the International Family Retreats along with the Wounded Warrior Family Getaways, serving American soldiers disabled in service and their families, JAF meets the needs of people with disabilities and their families, offering a week of fun activities, spiritual refreshment, acceptance and understanding. This year, there were 22 Family Retreats across the US, serving more than 800 families.

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“In a world filled with so much bad news, as well as a world focused on 'health and beauty,' people with disabilities often feel weighted down by discouragement and despair. But I'm so thankful we have the opportunity to serve and encourage these families through our retreats and getaways,” Tada said. “But I think our staff and volunteers receive the biggest blessing of all, forming friendships with those who attend the retreats and being strengthened by their faith and hope and joy – even sometimes in the midst of great suffering.”

JAF additionally continues to serve the disability community through the Christian Institute on Disability and the International Disability Center, offering a wide array of life-affirming ministries to people with disabilities around the world, including international radio and television programs filled with inspirational stories, and development of disability curriculum for seminaries and universities around the country.

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Note to Editors: For more information about Joni and Friends, please visit www.joniandfriendsnews.com. To arrange an interview with Joni Eareckson Tada, please contact Melany Ethridge at 972.267.1111 or via e-mail at melany@alarryross.com.