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Contact:

Erika Castle

With This Ring

(719) 598-5869

ecastle@dotheword.org

www.withthisring.org

Wedding Ring Donation Charity Calls On Orange County To Give Back

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High-profile divorces are not uncommon in Orange County, but if a local charity has its way this fall, wedding rings will be flying off of Orange County fingers for an entirely different reason.

Orange County Gives Back is a September through October fundraising event coordinated by Yorba Linda-based With This Ring, to raise money to drill 20 deep water wells in Yendi, Ghana before the end of 2008. While several businesses have already signed on to donate profits from hair cut-a-thons and product sales, With This Ring founder Ali Eastburn is hoping that the majority of the money will be raised through donations of rings from Orange County residents.

The tradition of wedding ring donations to fund clean drinking water wells in Africa began with Eastburn herself, who founded With This Ring in 2007 by selling her own wedding ring. "I realized one day that I had the power to save lives in third world countries through nothing more than the wealth on one finger," she said. The money from the ring was used to help dig the first clean-water well in Yendi, Ghana, a village Eastburn had previously visited with members of her church, The Well, which meets in homes throughout Orange County. The church has pledged to match up to \$32,000 of the funds raised through the Orange County Gives Back project.

Since With This Ring's establishment in 2007, more than 30 women have donated their wedding rings to the organization, resulting in the completion of 3 deep water wells and several more planned. With This Ring's goal is to dig 20 more deep wells in Yendi this fall at a cost of \$160,000. This is what Eastburn is hoping to raise through Orange County Gives Back.

"Yendi is about the same size geographically as Orange County," said Eastburn. "Orange County Gives Back is our chance to give from all we have, to share with our brothers and sisters in Yendi. It's a reminder that we have more wealth on one finger than most of the world's residents see in their entire lives."

Individuals interested in donating their rings, as well as businesses interested in participating in Orange County Gives Back, can contact Ali Eastburn at ali@withthisring.org. For more information about With This Ring, visit www.withthisring.org.