

New Longfellow Bridge in Honduras funded by Longfellow Benefits Gives Remote Tribe Lifeline, Access to Outside World

BOSTON—May 26, 2009—In remote central Honduras, a new bridge funded by Longfellow Benefits, a Boston based benefits-consulting firm, is giving impoverished residents of the Yoro region access to healthcare and education and a lifeline during hurricane season.

Completed in early May by GOAL, an international relief organization, the 215-long footbridge is called the Longfellow Bridge, appropriately enough—and it will save lives.

It is a sturdy suspension bridge made of stone, wood, steel and concrete, with a meter-wide footpath. The bridge gives 12 small communities in the Santa Rosita area of Yoro far better access to humanitarian relief, healthcare, schools and markets. Yoro is a mountainous region inhabited by subsistence farmers.

Flimsy traditional rope bridges in the area wash out whenever there's a hurricane or flood—common occurrences in the tropics, says [Longfellow Benefits](#) managing principal Joe Gray. The indigenous Tullapanes people are cut off and can't escape, nor can humanitarian workers bring in aid.

“The bridges that GOAL built in other regions in Yoro have made a huge difference in being able to deliver aid to the region, as well as serving as an evacuation route for some of the worst-hit areas,” says GOAL's Martha Hourican. “The Longfellow Bridge will provide the same access and evacuation possibilities in this particular area of Yoro during the next rainy season.”

The region is extremely poor, has limited access to potable water and no electricity. Before the bridge was constructed, villagers were taking huge detours, sometimes walking up to four hours just to reach the closest health center, school or the market to sell their produce.

Longfellow Benefits was the sole funder.

“GOAL effectively manages the project by using local labor and local materials,” Gray says.

“There are no architects or engineers to pay because GOAL works with an international organization, Bridges to Prosperity, which specializes in designing, building and training local people in building suspension footbridges.”

Founded in 1977 by John O'Shea, an Irish sports journalist, it serves the "poorest of the poor" worldwide. GOAL has funded about \$750 million in relief and development programs in 50 countries and counts celebrities like Bono and Mats Wilander among its backers.

"It's a fabulous organization with a very low expense ratio," Gray says. "Your money goes to help the people who need it."

More information about the project is online at www.longfellowbenefits.com/Site/NewsampEvents/GOALHonduras/tabid/537/Default.aspx.

Longfellow Benefits, founded in 1998, is active in other charities, most notably Community Servings, dedicated to providing free home-delivered meals throughout Eastern Massachusetts to people homebound with acute life-threatening illnesses.

About Longfellow Benefits

Serving organizations in New England and nationally, Boston-based Longfellow Benefits provides consulting and brokerage services in employee benefits, retirement plans and executive benefits. Its staff includes experts carrying top professional designations: Registered Employee Benefit Consultant (REBC), Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU), Registered Health Underwriter (RHU), Licensed Insurance Advisor (LIA), Master of Business Administration, Taxation (MBA), Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS), Certified Financial Planner (CFP®), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC), Chartered Advisor for Senior Living (CASL) and Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF®).

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