



*Vitamin Angels Press Release, March, 2007*

## **Vitamin Angels and UNFI Develop Unique Partnership to Provide Multivitamins to Children in the Dominican Republic**



### **Santa Barbara, CA.**

A leading paper in the Dominican Republic recently reported that there were no funds available to confront the severe malnutrition facing 27 percent of the children throughout the country. The number of malnourished children in the Dominican Republic is in fact three times higher for those living in the bateyes; the impoverished communities that at one time were attached to the sugar plantations in Dominican Republic.

**Vitamin Angels** and United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI) have teamed up with the Ministry of Health and Batey Relief Alliance to launch the Dominican Republic Children's Nutrition Program in response to the nutritional crises facing the children in Dominican Republic's bateyes.

"Today we are making funds available because of a historic alliance between humanitarian aid organizations, public organizations, private corporations (UNFI), who are providing funding for this project and our generous partners (Pharmachem Laboratories and Tishcon Inc.), who have supplied all of the multivitamins," says Howard Schiffer, executive director of **Vitamin Angels**, a nonprofit organization that has been providing vital nutrition through vitamins and supplements around the world for over 13 years.

The Dominican Republic Children's Nutrition Program represents one of the many efforts to address the health needs of children and families severely affected by poverty, disease and hunger in the Dominican Republic. The Program is a three-year pilot program that will provide daily multivitamins, along with antiparasitic medicine twice a year to over 55 thousand children inside the bateyes and in provinces where malnutrition is high.

"It was incredibly eye opening to participate and travel to the bateyes and feel the difference we can make in the quality of these children's' lives," says Rick Antonelli, chief operating officer of UNFI who joined Schiffer for the initial distribution. "Once you see the plight of these children, you can't help but want to do something and we are honored to be part of this with **Vitamin Angels**."

Last year, **Vitamin Angels** donated more than 100 million supplements to people in need in 40 countries around the world. For more information about **Vitamin Angels** and their initiatives including Operation 20/20 go to: [www.VitaminAngels.org](http://www.VitaminAngels.org).

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**Vitamin Angels** is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to providing basic nutrition and fighting vitamin A deficiency childhood blindness around the world since 1994. Last year, Vitamin Angels donated more than 100 million supplements to people in need in 40 countries around the world. Their Operation 20/20 program starting in 2007 will reach 4.25 million children in 24 countries. For more information or to make a donation to Vitamin Angels visit [VitaminAngels.org](http://VitaminAngels.org).

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