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SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR TEACHES AT TANSIAN UNIVERISTY

London, UK / August 20, 2009 — **Darren Clifford**, a Canadian entrepreneur, has recently completed eight weeks of volunteer work teaching entrepreneurial skills and problem solving to students at Tansian University. In addition to his teaching efforts, **Clifford** also made a significant donation to Gratia International for the purchase of two trucks and a filtration/packaging machine for the Iwene Tansi Water project — one of Gratia's partner organisations in eastern Nigeria.

A successful entrepreneur, Clifford has committed himself to educating others — often the less fortunate and those who have been taken advantage of by others — to take initiative for improving their own lives and circumstances.

“Everyone should be given an opportunity to improve themselves and their lives — this belief has led me to seek out ways to create positive change in the world,” Clifford said. “Through networking, I came into contact with Gratia International, which has spent the last few years building the Tansian University in Onitsha just outside of the Niger delta in rural Nigeria. What better opportunity to empower people for change than starting with the future leaders of the country: the university students.”

Clifford, who has been able to improve his own circumstances by becoming an entrepreneur and creating new and innovative ways of solving problems, knew heading into his time in Nigeria that teaching entrepreneurship is an important way to expedite change.

“I wanted to educate the students about taking initiative and responsibility to achieve their own goals, to take their own situations and apply positive creative determination. [The students] had an abundance of smiles on their faces and a strong desire for change. Even through constant daily hardships, these students were still able to focus on how they could improve and change their world.”

Tansian University rector, **Msgr. John Bosco Akam** commented, “Darren Clifford is a very promising young man, knowledgeable in the field of economics and business, and always dedicated to duty. Darren adapted well and quickly to the environment at Tansian and was so down to earth that the students loved and respected him tremendously.

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He always has significant goods to deliver to the students, and was especially good in providing practical instruction to the students, who rushed to his class. One of the students remarked that his course was one of the best things thus far experienced at the Tansian University. We pray that Gratia International will be able to send us more people who are the caliber of Darren Clifford.”

Dan Hill, Gratia International founder and chairman commented, “Gratia wants to sincerely thank Darren Clifford for all he is doing. To use the analogy of the fish, Darren went beyond giving our students fish and even teaching them how to fish: he taught them how to make fishing rods and distribute them, thereby restoring dignity and hope to the themselves and their community in a practical and sustainable way. This is the vision of Gratia and Tansian University.”

Tansian University, has already built a strong reputation for quality and ethics in an extremely difficult environment. Currently the university is educating approximately 1,500 on and off campus students at its campus in Oba. The long-term plan is to build a permanent campus to educate some 15,000 students in Umunya. The aim is to become a flagship university that will attract future leaders from all over Africa and attention from throughout the world.

The master plan for the permanent university site has already been approved and, in addition to state-of-the-art academic buildings and student housing, it will also include a world-class athletic complex and leadership training/conference facilities.

Gratia International is also working to incorporate food plots and a combination of wind, solar and hydroelectric power for self-sustainable and environmentally friendly food and energy supply. Sheaffer and Roland, a reputable Chicago-based civil engineering firm, has been commissioned to develop the water supply and wastewater infrastructure to support the university as it grows.

Gratia International is a London-based nonprofit organization whose mission is the restoration of dignity and hope, supporting initiatives in education, leadership and social enterprise in eastern Nigeria and beyond.

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Sources: Gratia International
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