



Contact: Jill Watson, Communications Manager
jill.watson@malteser-international.org
Phone: 1(305) 448-5111
1(305) 590-1818

For Immediate Release:
November 21, 2016

Malteser International Americas Announces Thomas A. Wessels as Succeeding President of Disaster Relief Organization

Atlanta-based wealth management exec heads up humanitarian organization providing emergency relief and sustainable development opportunities to vulnerable people in the Western Hemisphere

MIAMI – Malteser International Americas, the Miami-based global humanitarian organization and relief agency of the Order of Malta, has elected MG (Ret) Thomas A. Wessels, KMOB, as President and Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Mr. Wessels, former First Vice President at Merrill Lynch and retired Major General of the United States Army Reserves, currently sits as a Director on the Board of Directors, and he is a Knight of Malta in Obedience for the Order of Malta, U.S. Federal Association.

His financial acumen combined with his strategic military experience are tremendous assets, which will drive the organization effectively forward in a fiscally responsible manner, while being a dutiful champion of the organization's mission to serve vulnerable and marginalized people, and ensure they live a healthy life with dignity.

"I live by my faith and have taken a vow to care for the poor and the sick, and in my new role as President of Malteser International Americas, I pledge to live by the organizations' faithful values of caring, accountability, teamwork, and excellence," said Thomas A. Wessels, President-Elect, Malteser International Americas. "I am honored to use my lifetime of experience to help build greater awareness of the fine work Malteser International does for those affected by poverty, disease, conflict and disaster," he continued."

The President-Elect will assume his new role on January 1, 2017, when he takes over for retiring President, James F. O'Connor, who – for the last six years in his leadership role – has exhibited a great commitment of coming to the aid of the world's most vulnerable.

“Jim is a fearless leader who also possesses a heart filled with compassion for his fellow man, especially those who are suffering. He has played an integral role in the success and growth of the organization since its inception. The excellent work that he accomplished during his tenure has brought Malteser International Americas into the hearts and minds of our supporters in the Western Hemisphere,” said Ravi Tripptrap, Executive Director, Malteser International Americas.

“In the six years I have presided over the Board of Directors, I have seen families ripped apart by devastation. Natural and manmade disasters in the Americas, and across the globe, have left so many with despair. Fortunately, our emergency relief efforts at Malteser International Americas, give these survivors hope. That is why I have worked diligently to make sure that vulnerable and marginalized people in forgotten regions in this world get the help they need when they need it,” said James F. O'Connor, President, Malteser International Americas. “Tom, a fellow Knight of the Order, brings a wealth of experience to this position, and I wish him continued success in the years to come.”

This year alone, Malteser International Americas has been at the forefront of tackling some of the greatest challenges facing the Americas:

- Implemented immediate relief measures in Haiti following Hurricane Matthew to provide survivors with critical hygiene materials to reduce the risk of another deadly cholera epidemic, and dispensed clean-up kits and aid to restore livelihood
- Took action in Colombia to educate and protect pregnant women and their unborn babies from the Zika virus by providing prevention kits to often neglected populations where stagnant water is an ideal breeding ground for mosquitos
- Launched a fresh water program in the southwest of Haiti where the worst drought in 35 years has put those already experiencing profound poverty and extreme vulnerability in further jeopardy
- Created a new program aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality in remote areas of Colombia by providing those who are at-risk, and have been discriminated against, access to rehabilitated, better-equipped health centers with trained female health care workers

Also newly elected is Edward J. Delaney, KM, of Winchester, Massachusetts. He currently sits as a Director on the Board and he was appointed to Vice President. Mr. Delaney brings to the position entrepreneurial expertise and substantial business experience. He is a Knight of Malta for the Order of Malta, U.S. American Association.

The Malteser International Americas' Board of Directors is composed of 10 volunteer members representing a variety of personal and professional backgrounds. The board is currently comprised of a team of experienced leaders with combined experience in fundraising, finance, law, corporate governance, education, strategic planning, and senior management.

About Malteser International Americas:

Malteser International Americas is a global humanitarian organization with a mission of supporting the vulnerable and marginalized so that they may live a healthy life with dignity. Through our U.S. headquarters, Malteser International Americas provides immediate disaster response and preparedness as well as vital healthcare and nutrition to vulnerable people in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Visit www.orderofmaltarelief.org to learn more.



Pictured above: MG (Ret) Thomas A. Wessels, KMOB, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors for Malteser International Americas. The global humanitarian organization is the relief agency of the Order of Malta.