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January 10, 2012

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International Photo Exhibition Captures Gripping and Often Heartbreaking Stories of the Human Condition

Local photojournalist Michael Robertson to display exhibit at Hospice of Santa Barbara



*An AIDS patient in Thailand crouches in a hospice run by Buddhist monks
Photo Credit: Michael Robertson*

January 10, 2012, Santa Barbara, CA— Hospice of Santa Barbara welcomes local photojournalist Michael Robertson, who will display his work in its Leigh Block Gallery.

On Wednesday, January 25th from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Hospice of Santa Barbara will host a wine and cheese open house reception for the new exhibit.

Robertson is a documentary photographer with a focus on the human condition. He has travelled the world with his camera in tow to document people's difficulties, their rituals, their work and their celebrations.

Robertson's exhibit at Hospice of Santa Barbara will feature black and white photographs of Bangladeshi laborers, Voodoo practitioners in Haiti, lumberjacks at work in Romania, child laborers in Egypt, rickshaw wallahs in India and AIDS patients living in a hospice in Thailand. The exhibit will also feature color portraits of children from around the globe.

"These children represent the future, and by aiding suffering and improving the world, it is their future we are benefitting," Robertson said.

The experience of the AIDS patients in Thailand especially moved Robertson. While visiting a remote Buddhist temple in Thailand's Lopburi Province, Robertson visited a sparsely equipped hospice that

was opened to care for the country's rising population of AIDS patients. The hospice is staffed by several monks and medical staff who allow the patients to die with dignity. Many AIDS patients in Thailand are dismissed by family and friends and left to fend for themselves. The monks at Lopburi take in these medical refugees and care for them in the last stages of the disease. They provide as much comfort, medication and spiritual guidance as they can for their patients.

“The story of the AIDS patients at the Lopburi temple moved me like no other; the enduring work, patience and compassion of the monks and the suffering of the patients all in a remote outpost where they have been shunned by their society,” Robertson said. “For me, it is a story of ultimate grief.”

Robertson lives in Santa Ynez with his wife Kristen and their baby daughter, Vivian. He studied at the Brooks Institute of Photography and has a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Florida State University. Robertson works as a freelance photographer whose subject matter ranges from compassionate landscapes to the raw state of the human condition. The images are visual echoes that reveal his desire to evoke a spirit of humanity throughout the world. Robertson received a 2007 and 2009 International Photography award, a 2006 Chinese Humanity Photo Award and the National Press Photographer's Association 2006 Best of Photojournalism award. In addition to these awards, he has received several others. Additional work can be viewed at www.globaleyephoto.com.

Robertson will donate a portion of the proceeds from his art sales to Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc., a volunteer hospice organization. Hospice of Santa Barbara “volunteers” its free professional counseling and support services to more than 500 children and adults every month who are experiencing the impact of a life-threatening illness, or grieving the death of a loved one.

Wine, refreshments and cheese will be provided at the open house reception. Robertson's exhibition will be on display at Hospice of Santa Barbara through mid-April.

The mission of Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. is to care for anyone experiencing the impact of a life-threatening illness, or grieving the death of a loved one. For more information, please call (805) 563-8820 or visit www.hospiceofsantabarbara.org.

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