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Making a world of difference in a world of facial differences

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PHOTOGRAPHER TO THE STARS ERIK KABIK GIVES BACK WITH A SMILE
Director of Retna Las Vegas Partners with Las Vegas-based Charity AmeriFace

Las Vegas, NV – What do Holly Madison, Barrack Obama, Manny “Pac Man” Pacquiao and Miss USA 2010 Rima Fakih have in common?

They're just a few of the diverse prominent public figures captured by the lens of Erik Kabik, Las Vegas-based celebrity photographer and director of Retna Las Vegas, one the world's largest independent photo agencies.

“I spend my days and nights photographing and asking celebrities to 'give me a smile,’” says Kabik, who has been at the forefront of the Las Vegas entertainment scene for nearly two decades.

Most nights, you'll find Kabik working red carpet events, shooting exclusive coverage inside nightclubs, VIP galas and headlining concerts.

But far from the glitz and glamour of the Strip, the tiniest pediatric patients undergo extensive facial reconstructive surgery, often when they are only days or weeks old.

“By supporting AmeriFace I have the opportunity to give a smile back to the children who need it most,” he said. “The charity is focused on helping children born with cleft lip and palate, the most common birth defect in the United States.”

Executive director Debbie Oliver is proud the organization is headquartered in Las Vegas. “Ours is a giving and supportive community,” she said. “We're thrilled to partner with Erik to shed light on the medical and social challenges these young patients face.” One of Oliver's six children was born with a cleft, and she is the founder of the organization's most active program, cleftAdvocate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that approximately one in every 600 babies born in the United States is born with a cleft. A cleft occurs when sections of the upper lip and/or roof of the mouth do not fuse during early development of the fetus, leaving a large gap in the bone and tissue requiring reconstructive surgery over a period of many years.

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Whether it's capturing the quick action of a boxing match or the indescribable energy of a rock concert, Kabik is quick to point out that he does not engage in paparazzi-style photography. "I only shoot in authorized media settings at the invitation and with the consent of the celebrities involved," he said.

Oliver related that parents of children with facial differences are often hesitant about having their child's picture taken in any situation. "We are working with families to build confidence and self-esteem in these children and educate the general public about what true beauty is, and what it is not."

One of the longest running entertainment photographers in Las Vegas, Kabik is also the house photographer for The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, an establishment he first joined years ago as a member of the restaurant staff. His work has been showcased in such publications as Rolling Stone, People, Us, Esquire, 944 Magazine, Vegas Seven and the New York Daily News.

An accomplished commercial and architectural photographer, as well, Kabik is the founder of Blackstone Creative Services, a boutique advertising and design firm headquartered here in the valley.

"I am proud to be associated with AmeriFace and support their mission to lift the spirits of children with facial differences," he said. The duo looks forward to bringing a heightened awareness to the cause.

Oliver smiled. "With Erik's help, we are making a world of difference in a world of facial differences."

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About AmeriFace

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The mission of AmeriFace is to provide information and emotional support to individuals with facial differences and their families and increase public understanding through awareness programs and education on behalf of those we serve. We support individuals whose facial differences are present at birth, as well as those who have acquired facial differences as a result of illness, disease or trauma, such as stroke, cancer, accident and burns. Learn more at www.AmeriFace.org or call toll-free (888) 486-1209; local (702) 769-9264. **AmeriFace is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity (#32-0085490).**

About Erik Kabik

Erik Kabik is the director of Retna Las Vegas (www.retna.com), one of the world's largest independent photo agencies, and is also the house photographer for the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas. Erik earned his degree in photojournalism from Southern Oregon University. Erik also represents a large number of talented commercial photographers through his other companies, including Las Vegas Stock LLC, the largest Gaming and Resort library in the world (www.lasvegasstock.com). He recently launched Blackstone Creative Services (BCS), providing a comprehensive creative and advertising resource for companies seeking hands-on personal attention, cutting-edge design and a diverse background of experience in visual marketing communications development (www.bcslasvegas.com).

Documents and photos are available for this release.