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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Children's HeartLink sponsors medical team to Ho Chi Minh City** *Team of top cardiac specialists to perform critical pediatric operations during visit to Vietnam on November 9-13, 2009*

**Minneapolis, Minn. (Nov. 5, 2009)** — On November 9, 2009, Children's HeartLink will send a team of volunteers on a cardiac medical mission to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to participate in lifesaving operations on needy children. The mission to Nhi Dong #1 (Children's Hospital #1) includes a group of volunteer physicians, nurses and technicians from several medical institutions in Singapore led by pediatric cardiac surgeon, Sriram Shankar, M.D. The team will provide training and education to the local cardiac medical staff in addition to patient screening and treatment.

One in 120 children around the world is born with congenital heart disease. In the United States, children are typically diagnosed and treated at birth. Children's HeartLink, a Minneapolis-based international non-profit, helps build sustainable pediatric cardiac programs in the developing world, giving thousands of children access to treatment.

The November 2009 visit will be Children's HeartLink's third cardiac team medical mission to Nhi Dong #1. The goal of the mission is to continue collaboration with the hospital and to advance its pediatric cardiac program.

Additional objectives for the visit are to help Nhi Dong #1:

- To further establish collegial relationships and exchange technical skills and knowledge related to the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric heart disease.
- To observe and participate in the diagnosis and treatment of surgical and interventional cases with emphasis placed on modeling the team approach to pediatric cardiac care.
- To offer observations and recommendations on current pediatric cardiac services and plan for further assistance to advance pediatric cardiac services at Nhi Dong #1 for the benefit of children in Ho Chi Minh City and surrounding provinces in Vietnam.
- To follow up on recommendations from the medical missions in October 2008 and April 2009.
- To discuss future needs and ways to partner with Nhi Dong #1 to help improve the pediatric cardiac program and support its development as a regional center of excellence.
- To explore partnerships with other organizations to advance the quality of pediatric cardiac services in the region.

These objectives reflect the Children's HeartLink mission to enhance and sustain pediatric cardiac diagnostic, treatment and prevention services for the benefit of children at risk from heart disease.

"Children's HeartLink is committed to improving the lives of children suffering from heart disease around the world," said Estelle Brouwer, vice president and international programs director of Children's HeartLink. "With this partnership, Dr. Sriram Shankar and his team will be collaborating with Dr. Phuc and her team to treat needy children while sharing knowledge and skills for the benefit

of more children in the future. The contributions of these medical volunteers and the financial assistance from our supporters in the U.S. are wonderful examples of how through collaboration we can help save the lives of many more children.”

**About Children’s HeartLink**

Children's HeartLink, founded in Minneapolis in 1969, is an international medical NGO dedicated to the treatment and prevention of heart disease in needy children. The organization works in partnership with hospitals in underserved countries to improve existing cardiac programs by providing surgery, education and training for medical professionals, targeted technical assistance, rheumatic fever and Chagas disease prevention programs and donated equipment and supplies. Children's HeartLink’s ultimate goal is to empower local hospitals to care for children in their own region with consistent, quality and sustainable services.

Children's HeartLink currently works with partners in Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Malaysia, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam. See [www.childrensheartlink.org](http://www.childrensheartlink.org) for more information.

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