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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Corona Del Mar Teen Thrives on Philanthropy,
Recognized with O'Connor Mortuary Heart & Soul Award**

LAGUNA HILLS, Calif. – November 19, 2010 – Her palpable humility is not the only thing that sets Holly Tarbell apart from her peers. As many teens hit the mall on weekends, the 15-year-old Corona Del Mar High School student volunteers locally. While numerous girls her age spend their summers at the beach, Tarbell takes mission trips to help those in need. From the slums of Guatemala to gang-ridden areas of Los Angeles, the fearless teen has a passion to serve others in Orange County and beyond. As a result, Tarbell today was announced as the October recipient of the Orange County Heart & Soul Award.

“When you speak with Holly, you’ll know in an instant that she lives to help people. She is passionate about giving her time, talent and resources, and her excitement resounds as she talks about it,” said Neil O’Connor, president and CEO of O’Connor Mortuary. “Holly so vividly depicts why the Heart & Soul Awards were created – to recognize the unsung heroes of our community who strive constantly to make a difference in the lives of others, simply because they love to do it.”

According to Tarbell, her love for philanthropy was ignited when she was first exposed to the hardships of others at a very young age. Tarbell has visited poverty-stricken areas of Africa and Mexico, and considers the things she saw there to be life-changing.

“I was pretty materialistic when I was a little girl, but I’ve seen what people have and it’s nothing. Children who are growing up in the slums have nothing, and we take so much for granted,” said Tarbell. “It broke my heart to see these kids and I felt like I needed to do something.”

For the past two years, Tarbell has devoted a part of her summer to mission trips to Guatemala where she played with children at orphanages, distributed food to underprivileged families and entertained the locals by telling stories and acting in skits. On the weekends, she spends time with at-risk children in Los Angeles, where she engages them through arts and crafts – an endeavor she hopes will help disrupt the cycle of poverty, drugs and gang activity.

Tarbell also volunteers with the International Princess Project (IPP), which provides support to women formerly enslaved in prostitution. Part of the rehabilitation process includes teaching women to sew pajama pants so they can learn to support themselves and be a part of a viable business. She's involved with both the local chapter and a Corona Del Mar High School affiliate and spreads awareness to fellow students, holds fundraisers at school and hosts parties at her home to sell the pajamas created by the women of IPP. Tarbell also is very active with Young Life, a Christian outreach program for youth in middle school, high school and college. Tarbell plans to spend next summer volunteering at a Young Life camp for kids.

"I honestly don't know why I'm getting this award when there are so many people out there risking their lives and sacrificing everything," Tarbell added. "If they can do that, I feel that giving up my weekends or a few weeks during summer is the least I can do, and I get really excited to go somewhere and help out."

As a winner of the Heart & Soul Award, O'Connor Mortuary will present Tarbell with an official plaque, and a donation will be made in her name to a local nonprofit organization of her choice.

ABOUT THE HEART & SOUL AWARDS

Created by O'Connor Mortuary in February 2010, the Heart & Soul Award honors Orange County individuals each month for their exemplary and inspiring roles within the community. In celebrating the human spirit, the award recognizes OC residents for pouring their heart and soul into making a difference, whether for a life filled with dedicated endeavors or for a one-time inspirational achievement. One recipient is honored each month with an award plaque, a one-time donation to a local nonprofit organization in his/her name and recognition at a quarterly award reception. To nominate an outstanding Orange County citizen, email Patricia Kolstad at patricia@oconnormortuary.com.

ABOUT O'CONNOR MORTUARY

[O'Connor Mortuary](#) is the oldest family owned and operated mortuary in California. With offices in Laguna Hills, San Juan Capistrano and Irvine, Calif., it is the leading "stand alone" mortuary in Orange County. Founded in 1898 by Patrick J. O'Connor, and succeeded by his son Joseph and grandson Joseph Jr., the company today is managed by fourth generation CEO, Neil P. O'Connor and his two brother-in-laws, Joseph Fitzgerald, CFO and Charles Ricciardi, COO; as well as Jeff Turner, CAO. O'Connor Mortuary is recognized throughout Southern California for its longstanding tradition of caring, personalized service, honesty and integrity. The multi-generational company is active in numerous local charitable organizations and was honored by the California Historical Society for more than 100 years of continuous care and service to Southern California families. In addition, the company was honored in 2005 by the Family Owned Business Council for longevity and has received the Leatherby Award for Ethics in America.

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