

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AN ABC 7 SPECIAL – AUTISM HEROES AIRED SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH

Entourage and Desperate Housewives', Gary Cole, Wife Teddi and Other Parents, Speak Openly About Autism and Finding Hope

On Saturday, April 25th, at 6:30pm, ABC 7 the number one station in Southern California, in association with The Help Group, rebroadcast the powerful one hour television special based on the book, *Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge* by Dr. Barbara Firestone, with photography by Joe Buissink. Dr. Firestone is President & CEO, The Help Group and served as the Vice Chair of the three-year CA Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism. Her book has been sensitively adapted for television by ABC7 and featured anchors Michelle Tuzee, Phillip Palmer and Jovana Lara. This highly acclaimed and award winning book has been embraced by many in the autism community as a “compelling,” “honest” and “hopeful” account of the experiences of 38 families confronting the challenges of autism.

In their own words, the parents featured in this special share their challenges, triumphs, hopes and their wisdom to support other families on the journey. Actor Gary Cole, The Help Group National Celebrity Spokesperson and his wife Teddi, actively advocate in the public arena on behalf of all children with autism and their families. Gary recalls, “As soon as we started to get information, it got better; more information equals less fear.” *Autism Heroes* also speaks to the changing landscape of autism – the new era of hope fueled by increasing awareness, expanding research, early identification and intervention, the call for greater education and treatment opportunities and public policy reform.

“We are most grateful to ABC 7 for giving us the opportunity to share the message of *Autism Heroes* with its viewing audience, and for its ongoing efforts to promote autism awareness,” says Dr. Firestone.

“ABC 7 is proud to be associated with The Help Group on this special program,” said Arnold J. Kleiner, President and General Manager of ABC 7. “This is part of our commitment to the people of Southern California to provide essential information on a very topical and important issue.”

For more information about Autism Heroes, please visit: www.abc7.com and www.autismheroes.org. All author royalties from sales of the book *Autism Heroes* are being donated to The Help Group in support of its autism efforts.

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ABC 7, an ABC Owned Television Station, is the number one station in Southern California.

Founded in 1975, **The Help Group** serves children with a wide range of special needs and is the largest and most comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States. Recognized as a leader in the field of autism, it offers extensive special education, therapy and assessment services. The Help Group educates over 875 students on a daily basis in its innovative autism day schools.

Through its public awareness and outreach programs, graduate and postgraduate professional training, parent education programs and efforts at the state and national levels, The Help Group touches the lives of children with special needs across the United States and in other parts of the world. www.thehelpgroup.org