

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Miles Jackson, Executive Director, Washington, D.C.

(202)641-0497 Miles@cubaskate.com

Neftalie Williams, Director of Outreach and Development, L.A., C.A.

(310) 962-5643 Neftalie@cubaskate.com

Obama opens door for CubaSkate to rebuild skatepark in Havana, Cuba

"The passion for skateboarding in Cuba is real!"

-Ryan Sheckler, Professional Skateboarder and MTV-star

CubaSkate's recent fundraising progress adds momentum to the construction of a new skatepark in Havana, Cuba. President Obama's initiative to begin normalizing relations with Cuba provides optimum conditions for CubaSkate, a D.C./L.A. based NGO which delivers skateboards to Cuban youth and promotes dialogue between the two countries with blessing from the Cuban government.

"The shift in policy will greatly improve our chances of improving the Havana Skatepark," said CubaSkate founder, Miles Jackson. *"While we wait for the U.S. State Department to grant us full approval for our project, we continue our humanitarian skateboard donation efforts to reach Cuban youth."*

Since 2010, CubaSkate has promoted skateboarding as a new form of sports diplomacy, encouraging cultural exchange and delivering donated skateboards from the U.S. to Cuban youth.

"At this exciting time of re-emerging contacts between the US and Cuba, projects which connect ordinary people in the two countries have a special significance," explained Nicholas Cull, Director of the University of Southern California's Public Diplomacy Program. *"The CubaSkate project, with its emphasis on young people and the dynamic culture of street sports, is especially promising. It is hard to think of a better way to begin the task of building a shared future."*

Because of severed diplomatic ties between the U.S and Cuba, U.S. professional skaters haven't spent much time in Cuba. However, X-Games Gold medalist, Ryan Sheckler visited the island in 2011 and is excited to return to the island with CubaSkate, and show how skateboarding is both sport and self-expression.

"CubaSkate kills it! They give Cuban skaters the opportunity to have legitimate skateboarding products and a legitimate skatepark. Cuba was incredible and Cuban skaters are the hungriest. They make their skateboards by hand! I found it the most passionate skate scene," said Sheckler. *"I can't wait to go back to skate with all my friends there again."*

Legendary African-American skateboard-company owner, Kareem Campbell, was so moved by the president's efforts, he pledged skateboard donations from his company Citystars skateboards. *"There is a vibrant, dedicated group of skaters in Cuba,"* said Campbell. *"Citystars wants to send the message that we look forward to the day when we can all skate together."*

##END##