

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contacts:

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

(202)641-0497 [Miles@cubaskate.com](mailto:Miles@cubaskate.com)

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

(310) 962-5643 [Neftalie@cubaskate.com](mailto: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##