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FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

SUBJECT: Introducing Melon Mania

RELEASED BY: Cole Staudt

For many years, Iowa State University has been conducting research on plants. The University grows tens of thousands of plants that produce thousands of pounds of food. Since this food is grown for research, Iowa State can not sell it. Last year, around 50,000 cantaloupes were grown by ISU, only 60 were donated for use. The remaining 49,940 melons were disposed. Seeing this great waste, a professor approached Victor Theng, an ISU undergraduate, to see if he was interested in doing something with these melons. Victor initially declined, but after thinking about it later, he decided to start Melon Mania.

Melon Mania is a new philanthropy at Iowa State. We have been working hard over the past few months to get student clubs and faculty members involved in this amazing experience. As of today, 7 clubs have signed on to offer their expertise and insight to help Melon Mania be a successful event. Something that is very unique to this philanthropy at Iowa State is that Melon Mania posses the support and cooperation of 25 faculty members. Other than one or two advisors, faculty are not typically involved in students activities. We are truly grateful to have as many faculty as we do. These staff members are from multiple departments and are offering their skills and advice on multiple issues. This shows the tremendous support this philanthropy is receiving from both students, staff and Iowa State administration.

The proceeds from Melon Mania will go to Establish and Grow, an Iowa State organization that is committed to assisting those in the Kamuli District of Uganda in securing safe food and a great education. There are three schools in the Kamuli District that will benefit from Melon Mania: Namasagali, Nakanyonyi, and Naluwoli Primary School. An education for students in the Kamuli District is free, but families can not afford the supplies to send their children to school, so many students go without an education. Those who can make it to school receive lunches lacking in nutrition. Malnutrition is a huge obstacle not only for students but for entire families.
To feed one student for one full year of school costs only $4.72. A notebook, $0.25. Through Melon Mania we can have a large, meaningful impact on those who really need our help. Establish and Grow also works with Community Based Trainers and local assistants to run three nutrition centers in the towns of Nakanyonyi, Naluwoli and Kiwungu. These centers educated mothers on how to address concerns with nutrition and health. They are taught to plant, harvest and make a porridge that meets the nutritional needs of infants.

On September 11, 2014, from 4pm-9pm, Melon Mania will be occurring on Central Campus of Iowa State University. The seven clubs who have committed and more that will likely commit, will display their creations with melons. With around 50,000 melons to use, there will be all sorts of melons and melon products. Anything from catapulting melons to a melon recipe book! Some melons are available to be eaten and sold, so whole melons will be able to be purchased at a discounted rate. Each club will bring something new and great to the world of melons. Anyone interested in the event, student or not, may come and see what there is to offer!

At this point in time, we are seeking advertisement of our event to all persons in the Ames and Des Moines community. Since there is such a large amount of melons to be used, we encourage anyone to attend. If you would like to be a sponsor of Melon Mania, please contact our Public Relations Director, Cole Staudt, his contact info is directly below.

All questions and comments can be directed to the Director of Public Relations, Cole Staudt. He can be reached at 641-330-1847 and cmstaudt@iastate.edu.