New York, January 21, 2008…. The Freeplay Foundation announced today that two-time Academy Award® winner Tom Hanks will participate in a charity auction hosted on eBay Giving Works Jan 22-Feb 1 to support the Freeplay Foundation.

Tom Hanks, the Freeplay Foundation’s U.S. Ambassador, will autograph 10 self-powered Freeplay Lifeline radios for the charity auction on eBay Giving Works, eBay’s dedicated program for charity listings. Each high bidder also will receive a personal letter and a signed photo from Mr. Hanks.

“The Lifeline radio can change the world – one person, one house, one village at a time,” said Mr. Hanks. “The beauty of the Freeplay Foundation is the radio itself and the immediacy of its mission: to put radios in the hands of people who need them. Lifeline radios can make a positive impact from the moment they are turned on in one of the villages.”

People can go to www.ebay.com or can click on www.shopvictoriously.com to place their bids and to watch a special video from Tom Hanks.

Lifeline radios are not sold commercially; they are the first radios ever produced specifically for use in humanitarian projects. Radio is the primary means of mass communication in developing countries, but often, transistor radio batteries cost too much for people to buy on an ongoing basis and electricity is non-existent. The Freeplay Foundation provides radio access to the poorest people in the world via the wind-up and solar-powered radios, which do not require batteries or electricity.

Working mainly in Africa, the Freeplay Foundation enables hundreds of thousands of children to learn English, math, science and life skills through radio distance-learning programs. Coffee farmers learn new planting techniques using Lifeline radios, and people throughout Africa learn how to prevent HIV/AIDS while listening to their Lifelines. Nomadic tribes listen to Lifeline radios as they caravan, and orphaned children -- living completely on their own – can grasp a “lifeline” to the outside world when listening.

“The first time I held a Lifeline, I felt like I was carrying all the promise of the modern world in my hand,” remembers Tom Hanks. “Music can come out of the sky without batteries being tossed into landfills. Information can be sent and received, and voices of freedom can be heard. All by winding up this little box.”
The Freeplay Foundation is a fund-seeking organization with 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status in the U.S., is a registered charity in the UK, and has Section 21 non-profit status in South Africa.

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