

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Dean Robert L. Johnson to receive Desmond Tutu Phelophepa Achievement Award for Excellence**

**November 24, 2015**, New York, NY – The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train (AFPT) is hosting its annual awards benefit gala on **Monday, November 30, 2015** at Guastavino’s in New York, starting at 6 P.M. This year’s gala recognizes the achievements of global leaders in health, cultural arts, business, humanities, and philanthropy.

Dr. Robert L. Johnson, The Sharon and Joseph Muscarelle Endowed Dean, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS), is among the award recipients. He is the eighth Dean of NJMS, the oldest medical school in New Jersey. Dean Johnson will be recognized for his expertise and accomplishments in adolescent physical and mental health, adolescent HIV, adolescent violence, adolescent sexuality, and family strengthening. He is a well-known spokesperson on adolescent issues, frequently addressing local, state, national, and international audiences. Widely published, Dr. Johnson maintains an active schedule of teaching, research, and patient care.

Funds raised at this year’s dinner will help establish the third Phelophepa Train, called Phelophepa III, which will serve as a surgical facility and become operational in 2018. “We have never been able to offer any surgical services to the patients, which has been a great concern and a dire need,” says Cathe Kruger, AFPT Executive Vice President (Ex Officio). “Imagine the excitement of people living in desolate impoverished communities when a new surgical train arrives to do cataract operations, giving thousands of legally blind people a new day of light and sight.” While the new train is being constructed, the organization will add a car to the two existing Phelophepa Trains in 2016 to begin providing cataract surgeries.

The Phelophepa trains house a health clinic, pharmacy clinic, educational clinic, dental clinic, eye clinic, and psychology clinic. In addition, each clinic has an outreach program that visits surrounding areas and schools, to reach those who may not be able to make it to the train. The trains travel throughout rural impoverished areas of South Africa and are often referred to by patients as the “Trains of Hope.” Staff includes doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, and counselors.

Gala participants will include international dignitaries, American film industry celebrities, and local and national socialites. Performers from “The Lion King” will provide entertainment; a fashion show by designer Sergio Alain Barrios (SAB), featuring a collection of men’s and women’s clothing created from African textiles, will follow.

Past support for this project was provided by President Nelson Mandela, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and President Bill Clinton.

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**About AFPT:** With a vision to bring hope, empowerment and health equity to the poor in the rural communities of South Africa, Phelophepa provides a simple, one-stop service for its patients. Equipped with everything a traveling hospital requires, world's largest mobile clinic provides healthcare education and outreach programs that ensures continued care once the train has departed. This cause has received awards and won global recognition for using innovative methods and technology in which the trains bring the best of modern medicine to rural areas in South Africa.

**About Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS):** Celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, NJMS was founded in 1954 and is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, the school offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education. Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 22 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, The University Hospital. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region's "top doctors." Home to the nation's oldest student-run clinic, New Jersey Medical School hosts more than 50 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. For more information please visit: [njms.rutgers.edu](http://njms.rutgers.edu)