FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 25, 2010

Sutton REALTORS® Microfinance Low-income Entrepreneurs

White Rock, BC – "A loan of even $25 can change the lives of entrepreneurs in developing countries," says Alain Zaidel of Sutton Group – West Coast Realty. It can give a tailor in Cambodia enough money to buy thread and fabric. It can help a farmer in Africa buy tools. Recently, Alain created a team called *Lend 25 Dollars* on Kiva.org (www.kiva.org/team/lend25dollars) and built a website to promote it. He is enthusiastic about the potential of microfinance and REALTORS® leveraging their connections to transform lives.

Kiva is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2005 to link individual lenders with low-income entrepreneurs around the world. To date, more than 600,000 people have loaned over $120 million to people in 52 countries. Kiva collaborates with field partners (microfinance institutions) which approve and disburse microloans. Most of their clients are women and the average loan size is $400. The field partners take pictures of the entrepreneurs and share their stories on Kiva.org. Lenders are then able to browse entrepreneurs' profiles and choose someone to receive a loan. Kiva provides the funds to field partners at 0% interest. When a loan is due, the field partner collects the funds then reports on Kiva.org. The overall repayment rate is an impressive 98%.

"To me it's an incredible, wonderful thing," says Alain. "It's a loan not a donation; 100% of your loan goes to the person you support. Sometimes, you get back your money in a few months then with the same $25 you can help another person or exercise the option of taking back your money. It's a way to empower people who otherwise could never receive a loan and follow their dreams."

Alain spent much of his Christmas holiday creating the website (www.lend25dollars.com) to help promote the *Lend 25 Dollars* team on Kiva.org (click the "Community" link then enter search term "Lend 25 Dollars"). He encourages fellow REALTORS® to join and make a loan then share the experience with three people.

"REALTORS® are usually in contact with a wide circle of people including clients and businesspeople in their communities. If each of them tells three people and they tell another three people and so on, it will grow everyday. My goal is to reach all the REALTORS® in Sutton and eventually all the sales associates across North America. Then we can say it started with Sutton and that we all made a difference!" Alain even created a humorous email tag line: "Mortgage the home - Sell the Kids; Don't miss this opportunity; Lend 25 dollars.com Global-Microfinance."

Sutton is a 100% Canadian-owned and operated company with more than 8,700 REALTORS® in over 200 offices nationwide. To find out more about Sutton, visit www.sutton.com. To learn more about Sutton Spirit, visit www.suttonspirit.com.

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