



WORLD
Women Organized to Respond
to Life-threatening Diseases



For Immediate Release

March 2, 2010

Contact: Naina Khanna, 510-986-0340 ext 316 nkhanna@womenhiv.org

Oakland-based HIV organization part of Lady Gaga, Cyndi Lauper campaign

Celebrities hone in on women with HIV; renewed focus is timely, say advocates

Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper, the new voices of VIVA GLAM lipstick, are channeling their high-voltage diva energy to ignite From Our Lips – the new M*A*C Cosmetics VIVA GLAM campaign to address HIV among woman. In honor of all of the women who are living with the HIV/AIDS virus, and those working to curb its spread, the MAC AIDS Fund will announce \$2.5 million in new donations to fund programs that address the vulnerabilities and inequities that place women at increased risk for HIV/AIDS.

One grantee is the U.S. Positive Women’s Network (PWN), a project of Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD) -- an Oakland, CA-based organization founded in 1991 by and for HIV-positive women. “We are thrilled and proud to be part of this global campaign to address the HIV crisis among women,” says WORLD board chair Gail Silverstein.

From Our Lips focuses on global HIV “hot spots”, including South Africa, the United States’ rural South, and Washington, D.C. The campaign supports programs in regions that confront the complex causes of HIV infection in women and girls: violence, discrimination and inequitable access to financial and social resources.

In the U.S., AIDS is the leading cause of death among African-American women aged 25 to 34. Yet HIV among women is usually perceived as a problem in other countries, not the U.S., say advocates. “At the beginning of the epidemic many in Hollywood echoed the early activist motto “silence equals death.” It is time to break the silence once more about the impact of HIV on women, particularly women of African descent. It is our hope that these two mega-stars will inspire other celebrities to do the same,” said Cynthia Carey-Grant, WORLD’s Executive Director. “This is a matter of life and death, and we need them to take a lead on this issue.”

WORLD, and similar organizations have been providing essential services to HIV-positive women for years, and advocates consider M*A*C’s investment to be significant and politically timely. This grant will fund the U.S. Positive Women’s Network (PWN) to train HIV-positive women in media and as advocates. “Currently, health care is on the table, women’s reproductive rights are at stake, and the government is developing its National HIV/AIDS Strategy. HIV-positive women’s voices must be heard throughout these processes,” says Hadiyah Charles, community organizer at the Center for HIV Law and Policy and an adviser to the PWN. “We have a roster of HIV-positive women around the country prepared to speak and advise on critical issues.”

For more information about WORLD and the U.S. Positive Women’s Network, please visit: www.womenhiv.org.

###

Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD) connects HIV-positive women, their families, allies and communities to one another through peer-based education, support, advocacy, and leadership development. WORLD is a diverse organization by, for and about women living with HIV. For more information on WORLD please visit: [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](#) or call 510-986-0340.

The U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN), a project of Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD), is a national membership body led by and for HIV-positive women, including transgender women. We work towards a gender-sensitive U.S. HIV response by: 1) Cultivating leadership of HIV-positive women 2) shifting public perception and public will to promote a compassionate response to all people living with HIV 3) analyzing policy and 4) building capacity for collective action among women and HIV advocates. For more information on the U.S. Positive Women's Network please visit: www.womenhiv.org/positivewomen or call 510-986-0340 ext 316.