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**MediaRights Releases the 4th Annual
Media That Matters Film Festival on DVD**

**Collection Features Sixteen Thought-Provoking,
Issue-Oriented Short Films**

New York, NY—MediaRights announced today the release of its **Fourth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival DVD**. On sale now to consumers through Amazon.com, to educators through National Film Network™, and available for rental through Netflix, the world's largest online movie rental service, the DVD includes all sixteen short films featured in the 2004 Festival.

The fourth annual Media That Matters Festival premiered to a sold-out audience on May 18, 2004, at BAM Rose Cinemas in Brooklyn, followed by an awards ceremony presented by HBO and hosted by rapper Chuck D. It has since toured the country through screenings and streamed for a limited time at www.mediathatmattersfest.org. Created by MediaRights—a nonprofit organization dedicated to building collaborations between filmmakers and social activists—the Festival's mission is to celebrate moving, engaging, and sometimes humorous films that encourage social action and motivate change. The films range from animation to experimental, documentary to comedy, and offer a glimpse into the grassroots battles being fought by activists on a variety of issues.

“This DVD allows us to bring MediaRights’ mission of fostering community involvement through media outreach to a wider audience of not only students and groups, but concerned individuals, extending the Festival’s life beyond the initial theatrical and Internet screenings,” said Nicole Betancourt, executive director of MediaRights.

The sixteen short films included on the DVD tackle topics such as the environment (*The Meatrix; Seeds of Hope*), criminal justice (*Books Not Bars*), September 11th and civil liberties (*Day of Remembrance; Bush for Peace*), AIDS Awareness (*I Promise Africa; iThemba*), Domestic Abuse (*Novela, Novela*), culture-jamming (*POPaganda: The Art & Subversion of Ron English*), immigration (*The Sixth Section*), the working poor (*Struggling to Survive*), and childhood obesity and bullying (*Laugh at the Fat Kid*). Teen filmmakers are also featured with youth produced projects (*Children of Birmingham; Lean on Me; Dedicated to My Family; Struggling to Survive*). (Please see the attached list for complete film listings and descriptions.)

Offering a “festival in a box,” the DVD includes free downloads of information related to the various film topics as well as tips on hosting a Festival screening to encourage community involvement. MediaRights also offers teaching guides on incorporating the films into class curricula through its website, www.mediarights.org. All proceeds from sales of the DVD benefit MediaRights’ outreach and educational programs.

“These filmmakers go against the odds,” said Chuck D, rapper, activist, and host of the 2004 Festival awards ceremony. “Media That Matters, matters to me.”

Rebecca Yenawine, producer of *The Children of Birmingham*, said of the Festival, “I think it’s great to be side by side so many great pieces and so many pieces that have so much to say. It’s a very powerful statement about what media can do.”

Added Elizabeth Miller, director of *Novela, Novela*, “Media That Matters actually connects the films to action! I think this is the most important festival that this film has ever been a part of.”

"Media That Matters is a great addition to our collection of socially-conscious, thought-provoking DVDs," said Ted Sarandos, chief content officer for Netflix. "The short films remind us of some of the critical social issues facing our society today, and Netflix is proud to help increase awareness of these issues through great film-making."

The sixteen included shorts were selected from over three hundred Festival entries. The submissions were reviewed by a jury of media professionals, activists, and filmmakers, including cult comic book artist David Rees and HBO Documentaries’ Greg Rhem.

The principal partner of the Fourth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival was The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. Additional partners included 911 Media Arts Center, Bay Area Video Coalition, and Third World Newsreel. Festival sponsors included the National Film Network, Netflix, Sundance Channel, HBO, Alexander Summer Family Foundation, The Waitt Family Foundation, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Heifer International, Paola Freccero, and Frank Marshall. Additional support was provided by The Ford Foundation, Otto Haas Charitable Trust, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Open Society Institute, The Surdna Foundation, and the Time Warner Foundation. The DVD was produced with support from Ambient Digital Media and Newstyle Media.

The Fourth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival is available for purchase on DVD through Amazon.com for \$29.99 and to educators through National Film Network (www.nationalfilmnetwork.com/store/). The Festival is also available for rental through Netflix (www.netflix.com). Total running time is 1 hour 27 minutes.

Please contact Miyuki Jokiranta at (646) 230-6288 or press@mediarights.org to request a screening copy. Artwork is available for download at www.mediarights.org/press.

About MediaRights

The Media That Matters Film Festival is presented by MediaRights, an organization which builds the capacity of community organizations and filmmakers to reach, teach, activate, and educate their constituencies. MediaRights promotes the exhibition of documentaries in non-traditional venues and puts filmmakers in touch with new audiences. Equipped with the nation's most comprehensive database of politically and socially engaged films and videos, MediaRights provides educators and activists with the tools they need to create video curricula, curate audio/visual collections and use film more effectively in the classroom and in lobbying campaigns. More than 30,000 users visit MediaRights each month making the site one of the most vibrant online centers for community/filmmaker collaborations. MediaRights and the Media That Matters Film Festival are projects of Arts Engine, Inc., a non-profit organization. For more information about MediaRights, visit www.mediarights.org or call 646-230-6288.

Fourth Annual Media That Matters Film Festival DVD Included Films:

I Promise Africa, 2:40 min., Public Service Announcement

Jerry Henry, Director/Producer

When Jerry Henry set off to Kenya to make a documentary about orphans he didn't realize that he would be preserving on tape the voices of a generation that would soon be silenced.

Winner of the Jury Award Sponsored by National Film Network

iThemba, 5:19 min., Documentary Short

Keefe Murren, Director/Producer, Nelson Walker III, Director/Producer,

Lynn True, Director

Through the mesmerizing melding of their voices, the Sinikithemba Choir turns stage into soapbox, singing and speaking for the 5 million HIV+ South Africans in desperate need of medication and support.

Winner of the Health Advocacy Award Sponsored by Sundance Channel

Seeds of Hope: South Africa, 6:12 min., International Documentary

Sarah Hesterman, Director/Producer, Produced by Gotham Pictures, Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Solutions to poverty and malnutrition require resourcefulness and dedication. A group of women in a South African township learn how to sustain themselves and their children.

Winner of the Environment Award

The Meatrix, 3:47 min., Flash Animation

Louis Fox, Director, Produced by Free Range Graphics in conjunction with the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment

Will Leo the pig take the blue pill and remain in a fantasyland where quaint family farms produce food for our tables or will he take the red pill and get a cruel welcome to the real world?

Winner of the Film for Thought Award Sponsored by Heifer International

Laugh at the Fat Kid, 7:57 min., Narrative Short

Kristina Schoentag, Director/Producer

Whimsical and visually creative, "Laugh at the Fat Kid" intimately portrays a young boy caught in a cycle of ridicule and overeating, forcing the viewer to ask "What's wrong with this picture?"

Winner of the Peter Yarrow Peace in Our Classrooms Award Sponsored by Frank Marshall

Lean on Me, 1:46 min., Youth Digital Story

Harold Clinton, Director, The Center for Reflective Community Practice at MIT and Creative Narrations, Producers

When the mayor's office says "no," a group of kids find their own way to make their dream for a safe place to play basketball a reality.

Winner of the SEE CHANGE, MAKE CHANGE Youth Digital Story Award Sponsored by the Waitt Family Foundation

Books Not Bars, 3:44 min., Campaign Portrait

Mark Landsman, Director/Producer for WITNESS

A growing number of youth are questioning the way their state governments spend money. The teens of the Books Not Bars movement demand that education, not incarceration, be the priority, now and in the future.

Winner of the Criminal Justice Award Sponsored by Open Society Institute

The Children of Birmingham, 6:17 min., Animation

Rebecca Yenawine, Director, Kids on the Hill, Producer

Through stirring narration and beautiful illustrations, Baltimore middle-school students tell the story of their 1960s counterparts who fought for their civil rights.

Winner of the SEE CHANGE, MAKE CHANGE Youth Video Award Sponsored by Open Society Institute and Time Warner Foundation

Day of Remembrance, 8:00 min., Political Documentary

Cynthia Fujikawa, Director/Producer

The legislators behind the Patriot Act claim to have made America safer, but in the process they have destroyed the lives of thousands of innocent Arab and Muslim Americans. *Day of Remembrance* calls attention to this tragic phenomenon and reminds us that American history has a tendency to repeat itself.

Winner of the Racial Justice Award

Dedicated to My Family, 3:51 min., Personal Documentary

Nicole Sobottke, Director, Reel Grrls at 911 Media Arts Center, Producer

Nicole dreams about a perfect family. Living in a teen shelter, she has learned that family is where the heart is.

Winner of the Family and Society Award

Struggling to Survive, 7:37 min., Youth Documentary

Dana Hall, Ashley Potter and Mary Profitt, Directors, Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute, Producer

Having a job doesn't mean you make enough to get by. Teenagers in eastern Kentucky turn their cameras on the living wage crisis in their community.

Winner of the Youth Documentary Award Sponsored by Time Warner Foundation

The Sixth Section, 8:10 min., Social Documentary

Alex Rivera, Director/Producer, Produced in association with P.O.V./American Documentary

Sometimes the "American Dream" is realized on foreign soil. During the cold winters of upstate New York, a group of immigrants work together to give a baseball field, an ambulance and whatever else they can manage to their hometown of Boqueron, Mexico.

Winner of the American Dream Award Sponsored by Netflix

Novela, Novela, 7:20 min., International Documentary

Elizabeth Miller, Director/Producer

Every afternoon, millions of Nicaraguans gather around their TV sets to watch their favorite imported novela (soap opera). What would happen if a group of activists produced a homegrown novela about real issues like safe sex and domestic abuse?

Winner of the Women's Rights Award

Bush for Peace, 1:56 min., Satirical Short

Sarah Christman, Director/Producer, Jen Simmons, Director/Producer

It's Dubbya as you've never heard him before in a re-mix of U.S. foreign policy created from the Commander-in-Chief's "Moment of Truth" speech. *Bush for Peace* is at once a fantasy, a satire, and an earnest plea to stop the violence.

Winner of the Politics and Government Award

Spring in Awe, 4 min., Experimental Short

Martina Radwan, Director/Producer, Moira Demos, Producer

The overpowering displays of Times Square put a spell on the world in a disturbing lullaby of global capitalism.

Winner of the Media Awareness Award Sponsored by the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

POPaganda: The Art & Subversion of Ron English, 8:24 min., Portrait

Pedro Carvajal, Director/Producer

A modern-day Robin Hood of Madison Avenue, artist and satirist Ron English reclaims corporate billboards with uncanny canvases that force the man on the street to look twice...or maybe three times.

Winner of the Media Literacy Award Sponsored by Paola Freccero