

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT:**

Voleine Amilcar

415-356-8383 ext. 244

voleine_amilcar@itvs.org

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New Documentary GOING ON 13 to Premiere on Public Television
Four girls, four years and the change of a lifetime

“In the spirit of documentary greats like Seven Up! and Hoop Dreams.”
—Sara Nodjoumi, programmer, Tribeca Film Festival

(San Francisco, CA)—Meet Ariana, Isha, Rosie and Esme as they let go of childhood and fumble—and sprint—toward an uncertain future. This is puberty, and for each of these girls of color, it’s a whirlwind of change and new choices. Without flinching, **GOING ON 13** enters their world as they negotiate the precious, precarious moments between being a little girl and becoming a young woman. **GOING ON 13** will have its national television broadcast premiere on Public Television, August 30, 2009 (check local listings).

Four years with four girls in California’s Bay Area: Meet Esmeralda, or Esme, a Mexican American, who is first to complete her daily schoolwork and also first in her class to have a boyfriend without her parents’ knowledge; Ariana, an African American, who transforms from a tomboy into one of the “popular girls” as her family struggles to leave the poverty of West Oakland; Rosie, a mixed-race Latina, who at age 9 is precocious and sunny, but who grows into an alienated pre-teen facing the possibility of repeating the sixth grade due to chronic truancy; and Isha, an immigrant from India, who despite her devotion to her traditional family explores Internet teen chat-rooms, giving herself user names like “ghetto girl” and “cutie pie.”

Using a mix of intimate interviews, cinema vérité and stop-motion animation, **GOING ON 13** chronicles the girls’ coming of age—their blossoming desires and growing sense of responsibility, their hopes for the future, their difficulties in learning how to love themselves, and the escalating tug-of-war between who they want to become and who their parents think they should be. We hear the girls talk about themselves. They take us into their world, with the music, television, digital media and books they adoringly ingest—and which rarely reflect their own families’ economic or cultural backgrounds—providing texture, context and contrast for the social and emotional challenges they face.

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GOING ON 13 shows us a reality far more complex than what we are used to seeing in the media about pre-teen girls and urban girls of color. Without simplifying or sensationalizing their lives, we come to see these four girls as multifaceted individuals whose stories grip us with their intensity. Through the everyday drama of their changing lives, Isha, Rosie, Esme and Ariana remind us that it is the small moments of insight that usher us along the rough road from childhood to adulthood.

GOING ON 13 is a co-production of Vaquera Films and Independent Television Service in association with Latino Public Broadcasting, with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional funding was provided by the California Council for the Humanities' California Stories Initiative, the Skirball Foundation, the Women's Foundation of California, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding program, the Pacific Pioneer Fund, the Fleishhacker Foundation, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and the Open Meadows Foundation. The film is being launched in association with Chicken and Egg Pictures, the Fledgling Fund, and Working Films.

The national television premiere will be broadcast on public television in more than 25 cities. Please check your local listings or call your local public television station for specific dates. Please visit <http://www.goingon13.com/screenings/> for more information about the film and the broadcast dates.

About ITVS

Independent Television Service funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens*, which airs Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. ITVS is funded by the CPB, a private corporation funded by the American people. For more information about ITVS, visit www.itvs.org.

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