

Geena Davis and Independent Television Service confront the effects of media on children with *Guess Who? short videos*

SAN FRANCISCO (April 19, 2013) – The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), have partnered together in producing an educational program including five (5) kids short videos to be featured by the Women and Girls Lead campaign, a public media campaign by ITVS designed to celebrate, educate and activate women, girls and their allies across the globe to address the challenges of the 21st century.

“I’m thrilled to bring these educational videos and curriculum to communities around the country with ITVS’s support,” said Geena Davis, Academy® Award-winning actor and founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. “Our Institute is committed to exposing and eliminating harmful gender stereotypes in our media, and these educational videos are an important new tool for educating children and their families about the impact of gender representation in mass media. Media images are a powerful force in shaping our perceptions of men and women. The stark gender inequality in media aimed at little children is significant, as television and movies wield enormous influence on them as they develop a sense of their role in the world. And because young kids tend to watch the same TV shows and movies repeatedly, negative stereotypes get imprinted again and again.”

Guess Who? teaches children 6-9 to challenge gender stereotypes through the use of video and educational curriculum. Student producers at the University of Southern California, along with four other universities including: Boston University, Columbia College, Lipscomb University and Webster University worked with the Institute to create the short videos, which will be broadcast on public television stations nationwide and featured online by PBS’ Emmy Award Winning series, *Independent Lens* (<http://video.pbs.org/program/independent-lens/>)

“Kids learn their value through seeing themselves reflected in the culture. What message are we still sending to girls? Just as damaging for boys -- what learning to take with them into their future relationships?” states Madeline Di Nonno, Executive Director of the Institute.

“These videos, along with the education curriculum, seek to challenge children’s beliefs about gender stereotypes by showing men and women in non-traditional jobs, by getting children thinking critically about their own beliefs, challenging what they see in the media, and becoming aware of the array of possibilities for their own careers,” say both Ms. Davis and Ms. Di Nonno.

ABOUT WOMEN AND GIRLS LEAD

Women and Girls Lead is a multiyear public media initiative to focus, educate, and connect citizens worldwide in support of the issues facing women and girls. Combining independent documentary film, television, new media, and global outreach partnerships, Women and Girls Lead amplifies the voices of women and girls acting as leaders, expands understanding of gender equity, and engages an international

network of citizens and organizations to act locally and reach out globally.

By building a pipeline of some 50 public television documentaries and integrating content from partners across radio, commercial television, and beyond, Women and Girls Lead offers another model for public media to serve its mission in the 21st century, connecting key stakeholders to sustain productive dialogue and participation on the most critical issues facing local communities, the nation, and the world. For more information please visit: <http://www.itvs.org/women-and-girls-lead/films>

ABOUT THE GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE ON GENDER IN MEDIA

Founded in 2004, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and its programming arm See Jane, is the only research-based organization working within the entertainment community to develop impactful solutions to dramatically improve media images for girls and reduce gender stereotyping in entertainment targeting children under 11. Davis founded the Institute in response to observing a dearth of female characters while watching children's media with her young daughter. Fueled to take action, Davis commissioned the largest research study on gender prevalence in film and television. The research confirmed the disparity Davis observed: in family films, there was only one female character for every three male characters. In group scenes, only 17 percent of the characters are female and animated female characters wear the same percentage of sexually revealing clothing as live action female characters. The Institute's three-tiered approach of research, education and advocacy influences, trains and educates entertainment decision leaders, the public and policy makers. For more information contact Madeline Di Nonno, Executive Director, madeline@seejane.org.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the web, and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series Independent Lens on Monday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Mandated by Congress in 1988 and funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, ITVS has brought more than 1,000 independently produced programs to American audiences to date. For more information about ITVS, visit itvs.org