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**WOMEN AND GIRLS LEAD AMONG HIGH PROFILE PRESENTERS AT
MASHABLE'S SOCIAL GOOD CONFERENCE**

*Advisory Board Members Geena Davis, Abigail Disney, Asi Burak,
and PBS's Paula Kerger Among Panelists*

(New York, NY, September 20, 2011) — On the heels of the announced rollout of national PBS broadcasts for the [Women and Girls Lead Initiative](#), the Independent Television Service ([ITVS](#)) presented *Women and Girls Lead: Where Storytelling, Gaming, and Public Media Converge* at the Mashable's Social Good Conference at the 92nd Street Y on September 20, 2011.

Moderated by Aaron Sherinian, Vice President of Communications at the UN Foundation, the panel featured Women and Girls Lead ambassadors, Academy Award®-winning actor and advocate Geena Davis, filmmaker and philanthropist Abigail Disney, PBS President Paula Kerger, and Asi Burak, co-president of Games for Change.

Paula Kerger, PBS president and CEO, began the session with a [trailer](#) featuring highlights from the Women and Girls Lead initiative. "The true power of this project is that it will be a catalyst for civic engagement and will get people focused on the critical issues of our time," she said. "Talking about this initiative will enable us to lay the groundwork for making Women and Girls Lead a transformative experience, rather than solely a media event."

Over the next three years more than 50 documentaries will air on PBS as the backbone of the Women and Girls initiative. Among them are three miniseries, including [Women, War and Peace](#), a five-part series from THIRTEEN/WNET, executive produced by Abigail Disney, Pamela Hogan, and Gini Reticker; [Kind-Hearted Woman](#), from veteran PBS producer David Sutherland (*The Farmers Wife, Country Boys*), a four-hour FRONTLINE/ITVS special presentation chronicling the journey of a 31-year-old Oglala Sioux woman who risks it all to help her Indian community and abused women; and *Half the Sky*, a primetime television special and transmedia project based on *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's widely acclaimed book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, which will premiere as a special presentation of the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series [Independent Lens](#) in fall 2012.

Producer Abigail Disney stressed the importance of [Women, War and Peace](#), and noted that the primary purpose of the multipart documentary series is to shift the current dialogue. "Women are right in the middle of the story about peace and peace building. The intent is to take the camera and give the perspective of a woman; this has a radical effect because it shifts the entire discourse," said Disney.

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Academy Award®-winning actor and Women and Girls Lead advisory board member Geena Davis previewed her Guess Who? Project, an upcoming series of educational PSA spots addressing gender stereotypes. The project is to be produced with film schools and broadcast on Public Television stations in collaboration with ITVS.

"Kids can't picture women doing interesting things because they haven't seen it before. What we need to do is add a lot more female characters, because we really do take up half the planet and we're not some rare subgroup like we're shown on television," said Davis. "Encourage your friends to get involved with Women and Girls Lead and watch these incredible documentaries. It's a rare opportunity to see women doing and accomplishing real things."

Asi Burak, co-president of Games for Change, who has been tapped to create an online game to accompany the *Half the Sky* productions remarked, "It's an amazing moment for women and girls and an amazing moment for media, which allows for direct action towards getting people to do things that support the real world. They're a click away."

The Women and Girls Lead: Where Storytelling, Gaming, and Public Media Converge panel was streamed live in Mashable's Digital Media Lounge, where reporters were able to take an intimate first look at the Women and Girls Lead initiative.

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 conducted by Dr. Stacy Smith, USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism. The research confirmed the disparity Davis observed: in family

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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.

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