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HERE

Honoring Experiences, Reflections, and Expressions

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Community Group, HERE, Continues Artistic Response to VT Tragedy with Anniversary Event

BLACKSBURG, VA – March 1, 2008 – *Community Conversations through the Arts* offers artists' reflections on the tragedy at Virginia Tech in the heart of our community, The Lyric Theatre. Continuing the spirit of *Honoring Experiences, Reflections, and Expressions* that frames this group's acronym name, HERE will host the FREE multidisciplinary artists' response event on Sunday, April 13 at 3:00 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre. *Community Conversations through the Arts* will feature a visual arts display in the lobby of the Lyric, as well as performances on the stage at the Lyric. The performances will include dance, music, spoken word, theatre and film. Additionally, the audience is invited to reflect on the artistic creations with performers in a post-performance reception in the lobby.

HERE hosted *The Power of Forgiveness* last fall as well as many other community dialogue and artistic response events for our community's processing and healing during this past year.

Shannon Turner, Program Coordinator for HERE and the director of *Conversations*, said, "It's shaping up to be a lovely afternoon of programming." Shannon is basing the format of the show on an annual fundraiser that she used to host at the YMCA at Virginia Tech known as *Kickin' Off Steppin' Out: A Community Performance Showcase*. "While the overall mood may be more reflective than when I used to do the showcase, I am hoping that this will be a kind of celebration."

Susan Mattingly, who is also a part of HERE, agrees: "This event isn't just about the tragedy. We want to provide an opportunity for the community to come together one year later, celebrate, and reflect. It's about telling, hearing and honoring our own stories."

HERE is making plans to have the visual arts exhibit, including the film, tour throughout the region, and perhaps across the state following the Lyric premiere. "Many of the other communities in the New River Valley and other Virginia Tech campuses were greatly affected by what happened us, and yet felt isolated from us on that day," Turner said. "The tour would be a nice way to reach out to them."

Fundraising is still underway to support this performance, the potential tour and future events and collaborations with community and artists. Susan Mattingly said, "We already have some money which has been earmarked in the April 17 Fund at the Community Foundation of the New River Valley, the Lyric is providing in-kind support, and we have a small grant from the United Way: United in Caring Fund, but we need to raise more to have a successful event and continue the work of HERE."

Tax deductible contributions to the work of HERE can be made to the April 17 Fund at the Community Foundation by contacting at 540-381-8999 or visiting the website at www.cfnrv.org

For more information about HERE, check out our website at www.here-nrv.org or contact Shannon Turner, Program Coordinator for HERE, at 540-552-3482 or coordinator@here-nrv.org.

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