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**MediaRights Launches the Fifth Annual
MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL
at BAMcinématek and Online June 1
Presented by Loreto Bay Company**

**Sam Seder of Air America Radio's "Majority Report"
Hosts Awards Ceremony at HBO May 26**

**Netflix, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Foundation, Utne Magazine and Others Sponsor
Yearlong Outreach and Distribution Campaign for Festival's Inspiring Short Films**

New York, NY (April 29, 2005) – MediaRights, a Project of Arts Engine, launches its fifth annual ***MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL*** with premiere screenings at BAMcinématek and an online launch June 1. HBO's Manhattan headquarters will also host a VIP awards ceremony celebrating the winning filmmakers work on May 26. Sixteen provocative, short, social-issue films make up this year's festival and range from fast-paced musical animations to insightful personal documentaries that offer new perspectives on the war in Iraq, racial identity, global warming, gay rights, civil liberties, sustainable agriculture/development, drug addiction and more.

The festival includes a year-long program of web streaming, DVD distribution and screenings around the country intended to connect audiences to inspiring, independently and youth-produced short films that spark debate and action. Tickets to the June 1 premiere screenings at BAMcinématek are \$10 and are available at the BAM Box Office (718.636.4100) or through www.movietickets.com.

The fifth annual ***MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL*** is produced by MediaRights, an organization dedicated to maximizing the impact of social-issue documentaries by connecting filmmakers, educators, nonprofits and youth. The festival is presented by Loreto Bay Company, a real estate developer dedicated to sustainability.

A jury of media professionals, activists and filmmakers met in February to choose the sixteen official selections that make up this year's slate of films out of a pool of over four hundred and fifty submissions from around the country. The jury included Morgan Spurlock, Director of *Super Size Me*, Tia Lessin, Producer of *Fahrenheit 9/11* and Sean Wilsey of McSweeney's, as well as librarian Jessamyn West (Librarian.net) and teen filmmakers from Manhattan Neighborhood Network's Youth Channel.

"We were thrilled to double our number of submissions from last year," said Katy Chevigny, Executive Director of Arts Engine, Inc. "There is an increasing demand for independent media, and we've found the most entertaining, timely and innovative work out there. We can't wait to bring these vital perspectives to audiences around the country."

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The Fifth Annual **MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL** Launches June 1st

DIVERSE TOPICS

The sixteen short films tackle topics such as: politics and civic engagement (*Battleground Minnesota*, *Pizza Surveillance Feature*), the war in Iraq and military recruitment (*All That I Can Be*), media policy and the digital divide (*The News Is What We Make It*, *Laptop*), gay rights (*A Girl Named Kai*, *Homecoming*), juvenile justice (*Bad Choices*, *System Failure*), drug addiction (*Happy Ending*), global warming and transportation alternatives (*Neglected Sky*, *Fast and Reliable*), sustainable agriculture/development (*Young Agrarians*, *World on Fire*, *The Luckiest Nut in the World*) and racial identity and tolerance (*Something Other Than Other*). (Please see official selections below for full descriptions of festival films and awards.)

DIVERSE FILMMAKERS

The sixteen festival shorts were produced by independent filmmakers from around the United States as well as some from Canada and the U.K. They include a mix of men and women, adults and youth, African-Americans, Latino-Americans and Asian-Americans, and gay, straight and transgender individuals. Filmmakers include teenager Chris Johnson, aka Shakademic, a hip-hop artist from Minneapolis, who talks politics and music with former Vice President Walter Mondale in his film *Battleground Minnesota*; agricultural activist Johanna Divine, a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Fellow from Flagstaff, Arizona who profiles the next generation of farmers in *Young Agrarians*; Canadian singer/songwriter Sarah McLachlan whose music video *World on Fire* is a call to invest in development in impoverished countries.

Noteworthy this year is a large number of films made by teenagers: *Battleground Minnesota*, *All That I Can Be*, *Homecoming*, *Bad Choices*, *Happy Ending* and *Neglected Sky*.

SPECIAL LAUNCH EVENTS HELP KICKOFF THE FESTIVAL

On Thursday, May 26th comedian Sam Seder, co-host of Air America Radio's "Majority Report," will host an awards ceremony for the filmmakers at HBO's Manhattan headquarters. All sixteen films will be honored with awards and \$10,000 in cash grants will be distributed to select filmmakers. Additionally, Netflix is providing 6-month subscriptions to their online DVD rental service to all 16 filmmaking teams. Ms. McLachlan is expected to accept her award via remote video conferencing.

Other events include an invitation-only VIP Party for festival supporters at DEKK in Tribeca on the evening of Wednesday, May 25 and the "Media In Action Coalition-Building Workshop" at the International Center for Tolerance Education in DUMBO on Friday, May 27.

The "Media in Action Coalition-Building Workshop" is a day-long workshop connecting festival filmmakers with nonprofit workers and educators working for social change. Filmmakers will present their work and their goals for making an impact, while the nonprofits will identify tactics through which they can utilize the films to reach new audiences and galvanize their constituencies. Educators will explore ways in which the films can enhance their curricula and inspire their students to become engaged citizens. Active partnerships will be established and participants will walk away with concrete ideas for collaborative events and actions that harness the power of the Media That Matters Film Festival films. Participating organizations include Indyvoter, Free Press, New Visions for Public Schools. Guest presenters include Clay Shirky, internet culture commentator, and Robert McChesney, media reform author and activist.

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At the Wednesday, June 1 premiere at BAMcinématek, the films will be screened at 7 p.m., and audiences will have an opportunity to meet filmmakers and get involved with the issues at a Take Action table in the theatre lobby. An encore screening will take place the same night at 9:20 p.m.

Also on June 1st, all sixteen festival films will begin streaming online for a full year at www.MediaThatMattersFest.org. Visitors to the site will be able watch the films and take action via links that empower them to volunteer, sign petitions, write to Congress, or donate to key organizations. The site will include a highly-trafficked news blog (over 500,000 visits last year) that will connect the films to current events and alert visitors about upcoming screenings, new resources and opportunities to take action throughout the year.

FESTIVAL SPONSORS

The Presenting Sponsor of the fifth annual Media That Matters Film Festival is Loreto Bay Company.

"Loreto Bay Company values this opportunity to support like-minded organizations that are doing something unique to raise the awareness of sustainable development, environmental protection and a host of other issues that are vital to the survival of our planet," said David Butterfield, chairman of Loreto Bay Company and founder of The Trust for Sustainable Development. "Whether you work in independent film making or real estate development, elevating the world conversation on important topics is worth supporting."

"Movies are an incredibly personal experience and Netflix helps people see the movies that inspire and motivate them, and which they might not be able to find otherwise," said Ted Sarandos, chief content officer of Netflix. "The Media That Matters Film Festival provides an important platform not just for discovering great films, but also for getting involved with the social issues addressed by movies featured in the festival. Netflix is pleased to support this dialogue between filmmakers and their audiences."

Other festival sponsors include: Activators – Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Foundation, Netflix, Utne magazine; Motivator – HBO; Celebrators – Paola Freccero, Frank Marshall, Marcia Brady Tucker Foundation, Oxfam America; Initiators – DEKK, Docurama, Alexander Summer Family Foundation, Filmmaker Magazine, Time Warner Inc; Underwriting from – National Endowment for the Arts, Third Millennium Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Additional underwriting from – Benton Foundation, Expedia Media LLC, Lucius and Eva Eastman Fund, New York State Council on the Arts.

Principal Partner – Human Rights Watch International Film Festival; Additional partners– Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Alliance for a Media Literate America, Bay Area Video Coalition, Center for Social Media, Creative Commons, Magnatune, National Council of Teachers of English.

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FESTIVAL PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

(June 1, 2005 – June 1, 2006)

- ONLINE: Films stream online with “Take Action” links
- TRAVELING: The festival screens at schools, media centers, and theatres in over 30 cities around the country
- DVD: Distribution of thousands of festival DVDs to educators and community organizations
- BROADCASTS: The festival will be broadcast on cable and satellite channels (TBA)

ABOUT MEDIARIGHTS

The Media That Matters Film Festival is produced by MediaRights, an organization that 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 nonprofit organization.

ABOUT ARTS ENGINE, INC.

Arts Engine, Inc. supports, produces, and distributes independent media of consequence and promotes the use of independent media by advocates, educators and the general public. By fostering the production and use of independent film, video and new media, Arts Engine connects media makers and active audiences in order to spur critical consideration of pressing social issues.

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For more information about MediaRights, visit www.mediारights.org or call 646-230-6288. Please contact Terence Womble at (917) 216-3251 terencenyc@aol.com or Miyuki Jokiranta (646) 230-6288 or press@mediारights.org for photos and information.

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**OFFICIAL SELECTIONS OF THE
FIFTH ANNUAL *MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL***

Battleground Minnesota, 8 min., Youth Documentary

Directed by Gabriel Cheifetz, Produced by Phillips Community Television

Hip-hop activist Shakademic proves that if Walter Mondale can learn how to scratch, young voters can get schooled in election politics.

Winner of the Jury Award sponsored by Netflix

All That I Can Be, 8:30 min., Youth Documentary

Produced by Educational Video Center

William, like many young Americans, feels that joining the military is his only way out of a dead-end job and a rough life.

Winner of the Economic Justice Award

Pizza Surveillance Feature, 2:20 min., Public Service Announcement

Directed by Micah Laaker, Produced by American Civil Liberties Union

Want some privacy infringement with that? If the Patriot Act continues to grow in scope, you may get more than mushrooms with your next pizza order.

Winner of the Civil Liberties Award

The News Is What We Make It, 8:21 min., Animation

Directed and Produced by Nickey Robare

When the same company owns all the TV stations in town, where can you turn for an alternative perspective? A high-schooler gets burned and turns insult into action.

Winner of the Media Reform Award sponsored by Utne magazine

Laptop, 30 sec., Public Service Announcement

Directed by Larry Frye, Produced by Public Interest

A computer is only as advanced as the person behind the keyboard. Laptop reminds us that the digital divide still resides within our borders.

Winner of the Digital Divide Award

A Girl Named Kai, 8 min., Experimental

Directed and Produced by Kai Ling Xue

Through a stirring poetic mix of video and sound, Kai appeals to her traditional Taiwanese parents for acceptance in spite of her untraditional take on life and love.

Winner of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Rights Award

Homecoming, 5:30 min., Youth Documentary

Directed by Brian Schirber and Kirstin Nelson, Produced by Listen Up! and Perpich Center for Arts Education

When coming out makes Ron a target for attack, he finds a school where respect and acceptance are taught alongside Math and English.

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

Bad Choices, 3 min., Youth Digital Story

Directed by Aderian Fair, Produced by Natasha Freidus and Curt McPhail

Without a support system, it's hard for a teenager to stay out of trouble. Aderian reflects on the lessons he has learned from his bad choices.

Winner of the Youth Voice Award sponsored by Paola Freccero

Happy Ending, 8 min., Youth Documentary

Directed by Chris Irrizarry, Produced by HBO Young Filmmakers Lab

Drugs have taken Chris's mom out of his life but not out of his heart. In this personal travelogue, he goes to Philadelphia in search of a happy ending.

Winner of the Family & Society Award

System Failure, 8 min., Documentary

Executive Produced by WITNESS, Co-Produced by Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Physical abuse, sexual harassment, inadequate education for incarcerated youth – if a society can be graded by how it treats its prisoners, then the state of California gets an “F.”

Winner of the Juvenile Justice Award supported by Marcia Brady Tucker Foundation

Fast and Reliable, 7:52 min., Documentary

Directed and Produced by Tom Soper, Co-Produced by Sean Morrison

Nothing can stop Dexter the bike messenger – not homelessness or even a close encounter with a ten-ton truck.

Winner of the Against the Odds Award

Neglected Sky, 1:36 min., Youth Animation

Directed and Produced by John Cooney with Citizens for Global Solutions

In this fast-paced animation, youth-producer John Cooney shows us that a little effort can go a long way in reversing global warming.

Winner of the Environment Award sponsored by Loreto Bay Company

Young Agrarians, 8 min., Documentary

Directed and Produced by Johanna Divine

Young people plant the seeds for a sustainable future in this portrait of organic farming in California.

Winner of the Nourishing Change Award supported by W.K. Kellogg Foundation

World on Fire, 4:20 min., Music Video

Directed by Sophie Muller

\$5000 could cover the cost of hair and make-up for one day on set in LA or pay for one year's schooling for 145 girls in Afghanistan. Sarah McLachlan does the math and encourages you to join her.

Winner of the Citizen Engagement Award sponsored by Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Foundation

The Luckiest Nut in the World, 8 min., Musical

Directed by Emily James, Produced by Fulcrum TV

A singing peanut and his gang of shelled friends explain that sometimes free trade is just nuts.

Winner of the Global Justice Award sponsored by Oxfam America

Something Other Than Other, 7:05 min., Experimental

Directed and Produced by Jerry A. Henry and Andrea J. Chia

New parents Jerry and Andrea have endured their own share of discrimination growing up. They hope their newborn son can grow up identifying as something other than “other.”

Winner of the Tolerance Education Award supported by Third Millennium Foundation