

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Background Information:
www.dearfrancis.org

**DEAR FRANCIS DOCUMENTARY WINS CRYSTAL HEART AWARD AT
14TH ANNUAL HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL.**

Documentary Feature selected out of more than 500 submissions

Los Angeles, CA - Chronicle Project filmmakers, Dave Mahanes, Brent Gudgel and Jason Djang, are pleased to announce that their first documentary feature film, *Dear Francis*, will receive the Crystal Heart Award at the 14th Annual Heartland Film Festival taking place October 13-21 in Indianapolis. The film will screen October 14-20 during the festival. The filmmakers will receive the Crystal Heart Award at the annual Crystal Heart Awards Gala on Saturday, October 15 at Conesco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

"We are pleased about the opportunity to bring awareness to the unbelievable devastation being caused by the HIV/AIDS crisis in Swaziland. Almost 40% of the population is infected," says Producer Dave Mahanes. "Our goal for the movie is for Americans to understand and experience this pandemic in a more personal way than ever before by telling parts of the story through the eyes of two typical Americans. Hopefully through this film people will realize the average person can make a difference," says Co-Director, Brent Gudgel.

Dear Francis puts a face to the AIDS pandemic as it chronicles the personal stories of two strangers and the Swazis they befriend. After the UN officially declared the small African kingdom of Swaziland to be the world's most HIV-infected nation, Lance and Kelly, two Texas college students with high ideals, great hopes, and a bit of naivete, embark on a most unconventional AIDS prevention program. Developing relationships with their students, they discover that the causes of this plague are much more disturbing and complex than they could have ever imagined. Through this unique story and interviews with Swaziland's leading experts, the film highlights the hope of a nation's future against seemingly insurmountable odds... one life at a time.

Screenings will take place October 14-20 at AMC Castleton Arts, AMC Greenwood Park 14 and the Indiana History Center in the Frank and Katrina Basile Theater.

DEAR FRANCIS SCREENING TIMES

Friday	October 14	4:15/9:25PM	AMC Greenwood Park
Saturday	October 15	10:45 AM/4:15/9:55PM	AMC Greenwood Park
Sunday	October 16	1:20 PM	AMC Greenwood Park
Monday	October 17	9:25 PM	AMC Greenwood Park
Tuesday	October 18	1:00/7:00 PM	Indiana History Center
Wednesday	October 19	4:45 PM	AMC Castleton Arts
Thursday	October 20	2:00/7:10 PM	AMC Greenwood Park

Tickets for screenings and special events went on sale September 9. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.heartlandfilmfestival.org or call Heartland's toll-free ticket line at 1-866-HFF-1010. A \$5 service fee will be added to all Web site and phone orders. Heartland preview guides can be obtained at select central Indiana Marsh stores.

"This film is a powerful reminder that what matters most is that we choose to connect, take a chance that we can learn from each other and simply make the world a better place by sharing ourselves. The filmmakers did a brilliant job of letting life unfold and being in the right place to catch the beauty and tragedy of life," says Sherry Simpson Executive Director, *United Nations Association / Pasadena* and Producer, *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*.

Dear Francis will also screen during the Westwood International Film Festival on Wednesday, October 12, 2005 at 1:30pm at the Majestic Crest Theater, 1262 Westwood Blvd, Westwood, CA. For more information, www.westwoodfilmfestival.com

Heartland Film Festival, a non-profit organization, was established in 1991 to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. For more information, visit www.heartlandfilmfestival.com.

Chronicle Project

A documentary production company in Pasadena, CA, Chronicle Project focuses on telling the compelling stories of life through visual media that move people to offer compassion and hope. Chronicle Project was founded in 2003 by a group of filmmakers and travelers with production experience in over 25 countries for a variety of causes and clients. Past work includes commercials for Ford to NGO's such as the English Language Institute China and the Crisis Pregnancy Center. *Dear Francis* is their first feature film. For more information, visit www.dearfrancis.org, or call Producer, Dave Mahanes at 818 693-2733.

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