Girls Write Now Receives 2009 Coming Up Taller Award from First Lady at The White House

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 9 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) — Girls Write Now, a New York City organization that matches at-risk high school girls with professional women writers for mentoring and writing training, has been nationally recognized as one of 15 youth arts and humanities programs to receive the prestigious 2009 Coming Up Taller Award. Youth and adult representatives of the program traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend a White House ceremony on November 4, where they accepted the award from Mrs. Obama.

Coming Up Taller is a national initiative that recognizes and supports outstanding out-of-school and after-school arts and humanities programs for children, especially those with great potential, but limited outlets for creative expression. A project of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH), in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Coming Up Taller Awards honor programs that offer exceptional learning experiences in the arts and the humanities and that have a tangible effect on the lives of young people as evidenced through improved academic scores, enhanced life skills, and positive relationships with peers and adults.

Since 1998, Girls Write Now (www.girlswritenow.org) has helped at-risk high-school girls build critical literacy skills and find their voices through one-to-one mentoring relationships with professional women writers. Girls Write Now is the first and only East Coast organization to combine mentoring and writing training within the context of all-girl programming, which includes a full complement of workshops, public readings, anthology publications, and college-preparation assistance. While the New York State Education Department reports that 43.6 percent of New York City’s youth fail to complete high school on time, 100 percent of Girls Write Now seniors graduate and go on to colleges like Barnard College, Hunter College, The New School, New York University, Smith College, Swarthmore College, and more, bringing with them writing awards, scholarships, and a newfound confidence. More than 90 percent of their students are girls of color, and more than 40 percent are recent immigrants.

“For 12 years, Girls Write Now has honed our method and model, delivering high quality, rigorous, and constantly evolving curriculum to girls throughout New York City,” said Maya Nussbaum, founder and executive director of Girls Write Now. “Students emerge from our program armed with a body of work that confidently secures their place among our next generation of women writers.”

“This year’s Coming Up Taller Awardees exemplify how arts and humanities programs outside of the school setting can impact on the lives of our young
people,” says Margo Lion, co-chairman, President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. “By exciting imaginations and providing opportunities for self-expression through the disciplines of theater, dance, music and literature these exceptional projects offer their participants windows on possibility and a belief in a more positive future.”

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities bridges the interests of federal agencies and the private sector, supports special projects that increase participation, and helps incorporate the humanities and the arts into White House objectives. The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education. Because democracy demands wisdom, the National Endowment for the Humanities serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners.

For more information please visit the following Web sites:
Girls Write Now: www.girlswritenow.org
Coming Up Taller: www.pcah.gov/cut.htm
President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities: www.pcah.gov
National Endowment for the Arts: www.arts.gov
National Endowment for the Humanities: www.neh.gov
Institute of Museum and Library Services: www.imls.gov.

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