

The Echo Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

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The Echo Foundation Plans for International Distribution of “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel” Documentary Film

*Group Unveils Website; Begins Negotiations for
National and International Film Distribution*

Charlotte, N.C., Oct. 14, 2009 – [The Echo Foundation](#) has created a 56-minute documentary film, “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel,” and is currently in negotiations with national and international distributors to release the film. A website for the film (<http://www.inthefootstepsofElieWiesel.org>) is launching this week.

“In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel” was conceived of by The Echo Foundation to illuminate the dialogue between two intertwined stories: that of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Holocaust survivor [Elie Wiesel](#) and, that of the [12 high school students](#) who learned and traveled in his footsteps in the summer of 2007. “For The Echo Foundation, this film serves our mission in an exciting new way; one that inspires people across the globe to take action and to defend the rights of others,” said Larry Polsky, Chair, The Echo Foundation.

Charlotte-based [Indievision produced the film](#) in association with Emulsion Arts, an award-winning film production company. “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel” features an [original score by Fred Story](#), a nationally recognized composer whose numerous credits include four Emmy Awards.

“The [film](#) captures the magic that comes with discovery – the discovery of one’s personal power to bring about positive change when we acquire knowledge, commit to just action, and believe, without reservation, in the worth of every human being,” said [Stephanie Ansaldo](#), president of The Echo Foundation and the film’s director. “The film is a powerful vehicle to promote justice and inspire hope for a more humane world.”

Ansaldo and Executive Producer, Bert Hesse, are leading negotiations with distributors for the film. In the meantime, Echo has launched a website to promote the film and serve as a source of information about the film’s premiere and screenings, as well as to

provide a mechanism for people and organizations to engage in all aspects of the film project. The DVD and the [curriculum](#) that accompanies “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel” will be available for purchase on the website.

In 2006, responding to students’ question, “How can we have an international perspective if we have never left the USA?”, The Echo Foundation created *Footsteps Global Initiative*, a learning, travel and leadership program. In its inaugural year, the program focus was “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel,” which in turn, sparked the vision for the documentary film. The Footsteps Ambassadors were filmed in Charlotte during a private dialogue with Wiesel, in personal interviews, and during the two-week journey through Eastern Europe. Archival photographs and video clips of Wiesel are pivotal in illuminating this dialogue between history and modern time, between ugliness and beauty, and despair and hope.

The 12 Footsteps Ambassadors were Charlotte high school students at the time of filming. They were chosen following an intensive application and interview process on the merits of their intellectual curiosity, a demonstrated commitment to social service, and an innate sense of personal responsibility for humankind.

The Echo Foundation anticipates a Charlotte premiere of “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel,” to be scheduled in the coming months. Details on film distribution and screenings also will be available by year-end.

“By taking students beyond their geographic boundaries and introducing them to other cultures and histories firsthand, they begin to appreciate the richness of global diversity and at the same time, the challenges that face them as future leaders,” added Ansaldo.

About The Echo Foundation

[The Echo Foundation](#) was founded in 1997 to carry on the message Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel brought to Charlotte that year – a call to action for human dignity, justice and moral courage. The Echo Foundation brings to Charlotte speakers and programs that illustrate how one person can make a difference for humanity through its *Voices Against Indifference Initiative*.

Last year, The Echo Foundation brought Partners in Health (PIH) co-founder Paul Farmer and PIH Rwanda Director Michael Rich to Charlotte for events focused on global health. In 2007, Wiesel returned to Charlotte for a series of dialogues to mark Echo’s 10th anniversary. Previous Echo speakers include Rwandan Bishop John Rucyahana, African policy expert John Prendergast, Doctors Without Borders founder and French Minister of

Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner, Harvard African and African-American Studies
Department Chairman Henry Louis Gates Jr., Columbia Earth Institute Director Jeffrey
Sachs, Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, human rights advocate Kerry Kennedy, and Chinese
dissident Harry Wu.

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