

# The Echo Foundation

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **The Echo Foundation Film, *In The Footsteps of Elie Wiesel*, wins 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Documentary Category at CENFLO Film Festival**

September 14, 2011 (Charlotte, N.C.) – [The Echo Foundation](http://www.echofoundation.org) documentary film, [In The Footsteps of Elie Wiesel](http://www.echofoundation.org), won first place in the documentary category at the Central Florida Film Festival (CENFLO) in Ocoee, Fla. CENFLO presented three screenings of the film during the Labor Day weekend festival, including a special program for Ocoee High School students featuring a dialogue with the film's director and executive producer, Stephanie Ansaldo. The award was presented by festival founder and executive director, Bob Cook, at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Award Ceremony. (Note to editors: for a high resolution photo of Stephanie Ansaldo receiving the award visit [http://www.echofoundation.org/Current Projects/Footsteps of Elie Wiesel/CENFLO Award.JPG](http://www.echofoundation.org/Current%20Projects/Footsteps%20of%20Elie%20Wiesel/CENFLO%20Award.JPG).)

*In The Footsteps of Elie Wiesel*, illuminates two parallel stories, woven together through time and history, as 12 young people come face to face with evil and redemption. The film chronicles the journey of Charlotte, N.C., high school students as they trace the life experiences and formative environments of Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel – a coming of age story in the footsteps of a great man. Photo and film images of Wiesel give context and weight to the student experience.

Audiences have a unique window into the thought processes of the students as they share their journal entries with insights that accompany their journey. What transpires is a social dialogue with history as these young people become witnesses to the past, grasp their responsibility to humanity, and embrace their personal power to make a difference.

In addition to stunning imagery of the environments that shaped Wiesel, the documentary features archival Holocaust footage, original footage of speeches by Wiesel, interviews with Holocaust survivors and historians, footage of current events and the thoughtful reflections of the students who look to a more just future.

Charlotte-based [Indievision](#) produced the film in association with [Emulsion Arts](#). Led by Executive Producer Bert C. Hesse, Indievision's recent films were presented at the 2006 Berlin and Cannes film markets. Emulsion Arts is an award-winning film production company. Stephanie Ansaldo, president of The Echo Foundation, directed and produced the film. *In The Footsteps of Elie Wiesel* features an introduction by Richard Gere, music and lyrics by New York Fifth Avenue Synagogue Cantor Joseph Malovany and an original score by [Fred Story](#), a nationally recognized composer whose numerous credits include six Emmy Awards. For more information and to watch the film trailer, visit [www.inthefootstepsofeliewiesel.org](http://www.inthefootstepsofeliewiesel.org).

“The film – a moving account of young people on a quest to impact humanity by engaging with history – is a testament to the power of personal commitment,” said Stephanie Ansaldo. “The film is a powerful vehicle to promote justice and inspire hope for a more humane future.”

### **About Elie Wiesel**

[Elie Wiesel](#) was born in 1928 in Sighet, Transylvania, now part of Romania. At age 15, he and his family were deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz. His mother and younger sister perished, his two older sisters survived. Wiesel and his father were later transported to Buchenwald, where his father died shortly before the camp was liberated in April 1945. He wrote about his experience in the death camps in his internationally acclaimed memoir, “La Nuit” or “Night,” which has since been translated into more than 30 languages.

Wiesel is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he is a member of the faculty in the Department of Religion as well as the Department of Philosophy. He is Chairman of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, an organization he and his wife created to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice. He is the author of more than 50 books of fiction and non-fiction, and the recipient of numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award, and the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor. In 1986, Elie Wiesel won the Nobel Peace Prize. More biographical information: <http://inthefootstepsofeliewiesel.org/bios.html>.

## **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*.

Previous Echo speakers include Nobel Laureate in Chemistry Dr. Aaron Ciechanover, Partners In Health co-founder Dr. Paul Farmer, Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, Rwandan Bishop John Rucyahana, African policy expert John Prendergast, Doctors Without Borders founder and former 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 in Literature Wole Soyinka, human rights advocate Kerry Kennedy, and Chinese dissident Harry Wu. For more information about The Echo Foundation, visit [www.echofoundation.org](http://www.echofoundation.org).

The documentary film serves as a new medium for the Echo mission, giving visual expression to the foundation's work for social justice through education and positions the organization to reach audiences worldwide.

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