



## **WELCOME TO V-DAY'S 2008 PRESS KIT**

Thank you for taking the first step in helping to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day relies on the media to help get the word out about the global reach and long-lasting effects of violence. With your assistance, we hope your audience is compelled to take action to stop the violence, rape, domestic battery, incest, female genital mutilation, sexual slavery—that many women and girls face every day around the world.

Our goal is to provide media with everything you need to present the most interesting and meaningful story possible. If you require additional information or interviews, please contact Susan Celia Swan at [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org).

In addition, you can find all of our press releases (including the most recent) posted at our site in the Press Release section.

Thank you again for joining V-Day in our fight to end violence against women and girls.

Susan Celia Swan  
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**V-DAY ANNOUNCES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

**V TO THE TENTH TO TAKE PLACE AT THE  
NEW ORLEANS ARENA AND LOUISIANA SUPERDOME  
FRIDAY - SATURDAY, APRIL 11-12, 2008**

**\*\*\*FEATURING SALMA HAYEK, OPRAH WINFREY, JANE FONDA, JENNIFER HUDSON, GLENN  
CLOSE, JULIA STILES, ASHLEY JUDD, MARISA TOMEI, CALPERNIA ADDAMS, ROSARIO  
DAWSON, KERRY WASHINGTON, ELLEN DEGENERES, AND MUSICIANS JOSS STONE,  
COMMON, EVE, CHARMAINE NEVILLE\*\*\***

**V-Day's 2008 Season To Include Thousands Of Local V-Day Benefits Worldwide,  
The Tenth Anniversary Edition of The Vagina Monologues,  
North American Speaking Tour With Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler,  
Spotlight On Women In The Gulf South, and more**

**Support From The NoVo and Rockefeller Foundations**

**Pro Bono Creative Branding Campaign From Award Winning  
TBWA/CHIAT/DAY Los Angeles**

V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2008 with women and men from the U.S. and throughout the world.

Founded by playwright Eve Ensler on February 14, 1998 at the first benefit of her award winning play The Vagina Monologues, the global non profit has raised over \$50 million for local anti violence groups with events taking place in over 120 countries to date and thousands more planned during the upcoming anniversary year.

To celebrate the last ten years of ending violence against women and girls and welcome the next ten years, thousands of V-Day activists will stage their annual benefits beginning in January. V-Day's 2008 season will culminate with V-Day's mega two-day anniversary celebration in New Orleans Friday - Saturday, April 11-12 at the New Orleans Arena and Louisiana Superdome - V TO THE TENTH. V-Day's anniversary events are made possible by the generous support of the NoVo Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. TBWA/Chiat/Day Los Angeles is creating a branding and messaging campaign pro bono for the anniversary.

Each year V-Day increases awareness by focusing on a specific group of women in the world who are resisting violence with courage and vision. In 2008, the spotlight is turned to New Orleans and the Gulf South. The spotlight will highlight the daily ongoing work of women in their communities who have steadfastly kept New Orleans and the Gulf South alive with little to no resources. These women - "Katrina Warriors" - will be honored for their strength and resilience in the face of devastating loss. The spotlight will bring global attention and funds so that women may be safe and empowered in a region whose pulse beats like no other.

"V to the Tenth will celebrate our victories and usher in the next ten years where together we will raise the stakes, go further, go deeper, increase the power and CHANGE THE STORY OF WOMEN. What happened in New Orleans and the Gulf South after the flood and storm represents the challenges that women face worldwide- violence, global warming, racism, lack of healthcare and education, financial insecurity, and the failure of local and national governments. All these are pieces of the story of violence that continues to impact women in the United

States and around the world. V to the Tenth is a celebration, it is the call, the decision, the next step,” stated V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler.

Two invitation only fundraisers are in the works - on the West Coast in January and a special NYC celebration on Valentine’s Day, February 14. Throughout February and March, thousands of V-Day benefits are scheduled throughout the U.S. and the world from Shenzhen, China to Stockholm, Sweden from Canberra, Australia to Lagos, Nigeria. To coincide with these events, Ensler will embark on a nationwide 20-city V To The Tenth speaking tour. In February, Random House will release the 10th anniversary edition of The Vagina Monologues and the paperback edition of Ensler’s most recent book, Insecure At Last.

These events will lead up to V TO THE TENTH, the V-Day event of the decade, on April 11 - 12, 2008 at the New Orleans Arena and Louisiana Superdome. On Saturday evening, April 12, V-Day will stage a once in a lifetime event featuring international performances of The Vagina Monologues, musical guests, V-Day activists from across the globe including Kenya, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Democratic Republic of Congo and Eastern Europe, men standing up for women and much more. Calpernia Addams, Glenn Close, Rosario Dawson, Ellen DeGeneres, Jane Fonda, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Hudson, Ashley Judd, Julia Stiles, Marisa Tomei, Kerry Washington, Oprah Winfrey, and musicians Toni Childs, Common, Eve, Charmaine Neville, and Joss Stone have already signed on.\* The evening will open minds and hearts and raise much needed attention and funds for groups working to end violence against women and girls around the world, and in New Orleans and the Gulf South.

Tickets from \$25-\$1000 are on sale now. Visit <http://www.vday.org/tickets>

Over the weekend, Friday - Saturday, April 11 -12, the Superdome will be transformed into SUPERLOVE. Activities will strengthen the V-Day model of empowerment by linking art and activism; building bridges across class, nationality and racial divides; and providing a center of caring, learning and healing for the local community. During the two days V-Day will reclaim the dome, transforming it into a place of empowerment and action.

Special wellness programs are being planned for the women of the Gulf South free of charge throughout the two days. The space will feature events and programming – open to all - with international and local speakers (Carole Bebelles Rosario Dawson, Jane Fonda, Dr. Denis Mukwege, Suze Orman, NYC Council Speaker Chris Quinn, Rha Goddess, Kerry Washington and more), spoken word and performances, art installations, and more. V-Day activists from around the world can meet at the Superdome to network and connect with each other, and the women of the Gulf South.

V-Day will announce the SUPERLOVE schedule in the coming weeks with tickets available online. Sign up for V-Mail to receive information and program schedules for the Superdome, as well as the latest updates on V TO THE TENTH.

Over its ten years of art and activism, the V-Day movement has educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns, launched the Karama program in the Middle East, reopened shelters, and funded over 5000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Kenya, South Dakota, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt and Iraq.

\* Pending scheduling

## About V-Day

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop violence against women and girls, including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sexual slavery.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. In 2007, over 3000 V-Day benefit events took place produced by volunteer activists in the U.S. and around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

Performance is just the beginning. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and produces innovative gatherings, films and campaigns to educate and change social attitudes towards violence against women including the documentary *Until the Violence Stops*; community briefings on the missing and murdered women of Juárez, Mexico; the December 2003 V-Day delegation trip to Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan; the Afghan Women's Summit; the March 2004 delegation to India; the Stop Rape Contest, the Indian Country Project, and Love Your Tree. In June 2006, V-Day launched a two-week festival of theater, spoken word, performance and community events called *UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC* which invited thousands of New Yorkers to make New York City the safest place on earth for women and girls. During the two-week festival, *UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC* welcomed 2,000 runners in Prospect Park running to demand an end to violence, witnessed 50 actresses and over 100 writers contributing their genius, time and talent to sold out events, and reached millions through media and a citywide subway and bus campaign.

In Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, V-Day commits ongoing support to build movements and anti-violence networks. Working with local organizations, V-Day provided hard-won funding that helped open the first shelters for women in Egypt and Iraq, sponsored annual workshops and three national campaigns in Afghanistan, convened the "Confronting Violence" conference of South Asian women leaders, and donated satellite-phones to Afghan women to keep lines of communication open and action plans moving forward. Through the Karama program based out of Cairo, V-Day works in-depth to build networks ending violence against women and girls in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world, in 120 countries from Europe to Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, and all of North America. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In 2001, V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities" and in 2006 one of Marie Claire Magazine's Top Ten Charities. In ten years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$50 million.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. <http://www.vday.org>



### V-DAY'S MISSION

**V-Day** is an organized response against violence toward women.

**V-Day** is a vision: We see a world where women live safely and freely.

**V-Day** is a demand: Rape, incest, battery, genital mutilation, and sex slavery must end now.

**V-Day** is a spirit: We believe women should spend their lives creating and thriving rather than surviving or recovering from terrible atrocities.

**V-Day** is a catalyst: By raising money and consciousness, it will unify and strengthen existing anti-violence efforts. Triggering far-reaching awareness, it will lay the groundwork for new educational, protective, and legislative endeavors throughout the world.

**V-Day** is a process: We will work as long as it takes. We will not stop until the violence stops.

**V-Day** is a day. We proclaim Valentine's Day as V-Day, to celebrate women and men and to end the violence.

**V-Day** is a fierce, wild, unstoppable movement and community. Join us!

## QUOTE SHEET

“The cultish 1996 Off Broadway show [*The Vagina Monologues*] ultimately morphed into a non profit charity that has so far raised more than \$35 million for programs designed to end violence against women...performances [of *The Vagina Monologues*] have become something of a staple on college campuses. This year alone, 1,150 colleges and communities put together 2,700 V-Day events, occurring on or near Feb. 14, Valentine’s Day.

*New York Times, 06/12/06*

“*The Vagina Monologues* has, since its first staging in 1996, become a phenomenon in the worlds of both theater and feminism.”

*Mother Jones, 12/12/04*

“Best International Feminist Organization”

*Village Voice 10/7/04*

“[Eve Ensler’s] capacity to inspire epiphany in others is a life changing gift. It is remarkable to inspire it in a woman who had never given feminism a thought – but possibly even more so in a younger woman who imagines she’d heard all that feminism had to say.”

*The Guardian (UK), 10/9/04*

“With her usual mix of firebrand feminism and taboo humor, Ensler argues that “goodness” is the enemy of greatness, that the body is a distraction from women’s world domination.”

*Elle, 09/10/04*

“Now, it's not just a play. With violence against women a key Monologues theme, groups that put on a benefit performance donate proceeds to anti-violence charities such as rape crisis centers and women's shelters.”

*USA Today 2/3/04*

“It's a pretty ambitious agenda. But she might be the woman to do it--after all, there aren't many people who can claim to have built an international non-profit organization, raised \$14 million and changed the way people feel about the word "vagina" in five short years.”

*Chicago Sun Times 2/12/03*

“Pakistan is a country that badly needed a V-Day to raise awareness about violence against women.”

*The Friday Times (Pakistan) 4/3/03*

“Each performer donated her time to this cause, which raised awareness about violence against women- a subject seldom discussed in the Black community- and money for a number of non-profit organizations including African-American Task Force On Violence Against Women, Violence Intervention Program (VIP), The Dominican Women’s Development Center, and Sakhi.”

*Essence.com 4/8/02*

“Four years ago, Eve Ensler founded V-Day to draw attention to the issue of violence against women. Today, her movement includes remarkable women around the world fighting to end sex abuse. Their personal stories of triumph over tragedy will inspire you to join the crusade...”

*Marie Claire 3/2002*

“The event celebrated the honored role of the vagina, a function that has shifted to be seen as something indecent.”

*The Jakarta Post 3/10/02*

“Eve Ensler wants to save the world...and don’t even think of getting in her way.”

*New York Times Magazine 2/10/02*

“Despite the overwhelming statistics that would suggest victory is impossible, V-Day has grown exponentially, from an underground feminist event to a mainstream media one.”

***Chicago Sun-Times 11/28/01***

“Ms. Ensler’s unorthodox views on philanthropy extend to the way she describes V-Day. She shuns the word charity, saying it connotes weakness instead of strength. She prefers to call V-Day a ‘movement,’ with her play a catalyst to raise money and awareness ... ‘Eve thinks big,’ Ms. Fonda said in a written statement, ‘She is building an international movement without an organization in the traditional sense. No bureaucracy, no hierarchy, but a lot of love and humor.

***The Chronicle of Philanthropy 4/19/01***

"Therein lies the marvel of this V-movement, which has turned the stuff of the old take-back-the-night rallies into a hot ticket. Rape, domestic violence, even homelessness, when it happens to women - Ensler has transplanted these issues into a context that seems edgier and yet is somehow more palatable than the dread feminism. "Vaginism" doesn't get all muck up in messy issue like abortion or unequal pay. And though it often references lesbians - or their vaginas, anyway - the V-Movement doesn't get in the way of being attractive to men. "

***The Village Voice 2/14/01***

"Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* is not just a play anymore. It's a social movement."

***Los Angeles Times 10/16/00***

## Eve Ensler

EVE ENSLER, playwright, performer, and activist, is the author of THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES, translated into over 45 languages and running in theaters all over the world, including sold-out runs at both Off-Broadway's Westside Theater and on London's West End (2002 Olivier Award nomination, Best Entertainment.) Her experience performing THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES inspired her to create V-Day, a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. Ms. Ensler's performance in THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES can be seen in the HBO original documentary of the play (2002).

In 2006, Eve Ensler released her first major work written exclusively for the printed page. INSECURE AT LAST: LOSING IT IN OUR SECURITY-OBSSESSED WORLD is a timely and urgent look at how we live today, the drastic measures taken to keep us safe, and how we can truly experience freedom by letting go of the deceptive notion of vigilant "protection."

Ms. Ensler has devoted her life to stopping violence, envisioning a planet in which women and girls will be free to thrive, rather than merely survive. THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES is based on Ensler's interviews with more than 200 women. With humor and grace the piece celebrates women's sexuality and strength.

Today, V-Day is a global movement that supports anti-violence organizations throughout the world, helping them to continue and expand their core work on the ground, while drawing public attention to the larger fight to stop worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual slavery) against women and girls. V-Day exists for no other reason than to stop violence against women. In just eight years, it has raised over \$40 million and was named one of Worth magazine's "100 Best Charities" in 2001 and Marie Claire's "Top Ten Charities" in 2006.

V-Day stages large-scale benefits and produces innovative gatherings, films, and programs to educate and change social attitudes regarding violence against women. These include the 2004 documentary "Until The Violence Stops"; community briefings with Amnesty International on the missing and murdered women of Juarez, Mexico; the December 2002 V-Day delegation trip to Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan; the Afghan Women's Summit; the Stop Rape Contest; and the Indian Country Project. In June 2006, V-Day launched the *UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC* festival which invited thousands of New Yorkers to stand up and join V-Day in making New York City the safest place on earth for women and girls.

In 2006, more than 2700 V-Day benefit events - produced by local volunteer activists and performed in theaters, community centers, houses of worship, and college campuses - took place around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising funds for local groups within their communities.

In 2004, Ms. Ensler's performed her play *The Good Body* on Broadway in NYC and at ACT in San Francisco, and in a workshop production at Seattle Repertory Theatre. This was followed by a 20 city national tour in 2005. In September 2006 Ms. Ensler's newest play THE TREATMENT, which examined the relationship between a military therapist and soldier who was suffering PTSD opened at the Culture Project. Her play NECESSARY TARGETS, set in a Bosnian refugee camp, opened Off-Broadway at the Variety Arts Theater in February 2002, after a hit run at Hartford Stage. Other plays include CONVICTION, LEMONADE, THE DEPOT, FLOATING RHODA AND THE GLUE MAN, and EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES. THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES, THE GOOD BODY, NECESSARY TARGETS and INSECURE AT LAST have been published by Villard/Random House. VAGINA WARRIORS, words by Eve Ensler and photos by Joyce Tenneson, has been published by Bulfinch Press for V-Day 2005.

Ms. Ensler is the Executive Producer of WHAT I WANT MY WORDS TO DO TO YOU, a documentary about the writing group she has led since 1998 at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. The film had its world premiere at the 2003 and premiered nationally on PBS's "P.O.V." in December 2003.

**TAKE ACTION TO HELP STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**  
**Tell your readers and listeners about these important action items**

⇒ **Sponsor an Event**

**The Worldwide Campaign** seeks to bring V-Day's message to the broadest possible audience. Through collaboration with organizations and communities at a grassroots level, the Worldwide Campaign hopes to make V-Day a catalyst for mobilizing communities to stop violence against women. To join the campaign, or for more information, please send your audience to [www.vday.org/world](http://www.vday.org/world).

Hundreds of colleges and universities around the world have presented benefit productions of *The Vagina Monologues* through the **College Campaign** to raise awareness and money to stop violence against women and girls. The proceeds from these events go back into the schools' communities to local organizations and programs that are already working to stop sexual violence. To join the campaign, or for more information, please send your audience to [www.vday.org/college](http://www.vday.org/college).

**Host an Event in Honor of V-Day:** If you want to create a fundraising event that is not a production of *The Vagina Monologues*, you can creatively raise money for your local anti-violence organization and/or for V-Day. There are specific guidelines. For more information, please tell your audience to contact [sponsor@vday.org](mailto:sponsor@vday.org).

⇒ **Take Action**

**Donate:** Donate online at [www.vday.org/donate](http://www.vday.org/donate).

**Shop:** Help stop violence against women and girls while you shop! For more information, visit the V-Day Online Store at <http://www.store-vday.org/>

**Subscribe:** Subscribe to V-Mail, the V-Day newsletter. It includes news of upcoming events, messages from Eve Ensler, and opportunities for participating in campaigns that will change the world, and other information relating to our shared work of stopping violence against women and girls. To subscribe, visit <http://www.vday.org/contents/action/vmail>.

## **V-DAY COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS**

The V-Day College and Community Campaigns strive to empower women to find their collective voices and demand an end to the epidemic levels of violence and abuse in their communities around the world.

### **What is the V-Day College Campaign?**

The V-Day College Campaign invites members of college and university communities around the world to present V-Day benefit productions of *The Vagina Monologues* (e.g. V-Day Tulane, V-Day USC) on their campuses on or around V-Day (February 14<sup>th</sup>) to raise money and awareness to stop violence against women and girls. The proceeds from these events are donated directly to local organizations in their communities that are working to stop this violence. One of the goals of the College Campaign is to empower young people – the leaders, shapers and messengers of the future.

For more information about the V-Day College Campaign, visit: [www.vday.org/college](http://www.vday.org/college).

To sign up for the V-Day College Campaign, go to: [www.vday.org/vspot](http://www.vday.org/vspot).

### **What is the V-Day Community Campaign?**

The V-Day Community Campaign invites towns and cities around the world to present V-Day benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” (e.g. V-Day San Francisco, V-Day London) on or around V-Day (February 14<sup>th</sup>) to raise money and awareness to stop violence against women and girls. The proceeds from these events are donated directly to local organizations in the community that are working to stop this violence. For more information about the V-Day Community Campaign, visit: [www.vday.org/world](http://www.vday.org/world).

To sign up for the V-Day Community Campaign, go to: [www.vday.org/signup](http://www.vday.org/signup).

**SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE**  
(Additional articles are available at [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org))

- Page 12: "The Big 'V'-easy" New Orleans Times-Picayune: December 15, 2007
- Page 14: 'Vagina Monologues' Author Fights Atrocities in Congo," Associated Press, August 22, 2007
- Page 15: "Women Left For Dead—And The Man Who's Saving Them" GLAMOUR, August, 2007
- Page 19: "Wartime Victim Makes Heartfelt Plea For Redress" July 21, 2007: Los Angeles Times:
- Page 20: "Eve Ensler, the Original 'Vagina Warrior,' Organizes Arts Festival"  
The New York Times June 12, 2006
- Page 21: "Ensler Turns New York Into Anti-Violence Showcase" Women's eNews June 20, 2006
- Page 23: "Vagina Warrior Agnes Pareyio Named the United Nations in Kenya Person of the Year  
The Standard, October 24, 2005
- Page 23: "The Vagina Monologues to Open in Taipei" Taiwan news, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004
- Page 24: "Can You Say It?" The Observer, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005
- Page 25: "'Good' Bodies & Bad Politics" Mother Jones, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004
- Page 27: "The Whole Truth" the Guardian (UK), October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004.
- Page 30: "Women's Conference Unites Activists, Stars" The Associated Press, September 12, 2004
- Page 31: "Lessons for the Lambs to Fight Off Wolves" The Nation, July 28, 2004
- Page 33: "The Vagina Is So Yesterday -- Ensler Says Now It's All About Her Stomach"  
*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 2004
- Page 34: "V-Day Manila Organizers To Produce "TVM" in Tokyo", *Tokyo Business Wire*, June 14<sup>th</sup>  
2004
- Page 35: "Eve Ensler to Receive Award for International Peace Efforts" Annual Award to be Given by  
Student Groups at Cardozo Law April 19, 2004
- Page 37: "Vagina Monologues' Becoming College Phenomenon" *USA TODAY*, March 2,  
2004
- Page 38: "Eve Ensler and Amnesty International March on Juarez to Stop the Murder of Young  
Women" *Village Voice*, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004
- Page 40: "Violence: A Women's Issue, Sundance film follows play's rise from theater to worldwide  
Movement" *Salt Lake Tribune* (Salt Lake City, Utah), January 16, 2004
- Page 41: "Concerns Spread Over Juarez Murders" *Associated Press*, November 24, 2003
- Page 42: "V-Day Nairobi 2003 Event Saves a Shelter" *The East African Standard* (Nairobi), June 24,  
2003
- Page 42: "Spreading the V word" *The Friday Times* (Pakistan), April 3, 2003
- Page 43: "Feminist forces invade Pakistan to win the battle of Vaginabad" *Sunday Times* (London),  
March 17, 2003
- Page 44: "V-Day Looks Beyond The Vagina Monologues" *Womens Enews*, February 14,  
2003
- Page 45: "Playwright Eve Ensler is on a Mission to Raise Consciousness" *The Jerusalem Post*, December 26, 2002
- Page 48: "When in Rome - A Report from the First V-World Summit" *The Nation*,  
December 2, 2002
- Page 50: "Haven for Kenyan Women Opens" *Associated Press*, April 9, 2002
- Page 51: "Eve Ensler Uses the V Word" *Newsweek*, February 18, 2002
- Page 53: "800 Events Promote V-Day from Antarctica to Zaire" *Women's Enews*,  
February 14, 2002
- Page 55: "V-Day Fights Rape, Battery" *San Francisco Examiner*, November 16, 2001

**The Big 'V'-easy**  
**New Orleans Times-Picayune: December 15, 2007**

'Vagina Monologues' playwright Eve Ensler plans a star-studded V-Day 10th anniversary performance here in April

When playwright Eve Ensler first performed "The Vagina Monologues" in 1996 at a small downtown New York performing space called The HERE Theater, "There were maybe 50 people in the audience," she said.

On April 12, "The Vagina Monologues," which has become a worldwide phenomenon, launching the V-Day project to end violence against women, will play the 17,000-seat New Orleans Arena with a cast scheduled to include Jane Fonda, Glenn Close, Jennifer Hudson, Ellen DeGeneres, Charmaine Neville, Salma Hayek, Rosario Dawson, Ashley Judd, Julia Stiles, Marisa Tomei and Oprah Winfrey, for whom Ensler is writing a new monologue.

April 11 and 12 will find the Louisiana Superdome interior turned into a pink and red vagina -- "with a big vagina entrance," Ensler said -- as a setting for performance events, parties, parades, workshops, wellness and education programs, speakers, even spa treatments, which will be free to residents of New Orleans and the Gulf South. (Men are excluded only from the spa.)

For those two days, New Orleans will be "the Vagina Capital of America," Ensler said. "We're coming here to say that we should celebrate New Orleans, cherish it, protect it, just as we do our vaginas, and make sure it goes on and on."

Ensler penned "The Vagina Monologues," culled from interviews with more than 200 women, at a time when the word vagina was rarely used except in a medical context. In just 11 years -- directly as a result of her play -- the word is in common usage, in headline type, prompting new euphemisms -- such as Winfrey's "Va-jay-jay" -- to join the parade of nicknames, both delightful and derogatory, that Ensler collected in her play.

"Naming is about existing. Naming things says they exist," she said, although she made a face when told of "Talk Soup's" recent "Vaginapocalypse."

By turning her reportage into art with stories both humorous and harrowing, laughter existing side-by-side with first-person accounts of sexual mutilation, torture and atrocity, Ensler created powerful theater that has been performed in 45 languages, and a movement that has taken on a life of its own. There are V-Day activists in 119 countries, Ensler said.

The New Orleans event -- "V to the 10th" -- marks the 10th anniversary of the V-Day Project and will be the culmination of thousands of worldwide productions of the play, as is the case every February and March, and Ensler's own 20-city U.S. tour. A 10th anniversary edition of "The Vagina Monologues" will be released along with the paperback edition of Ensler's book "Insecure at Last."

To date, performances of the play have raised more than \$50 million for local anti-violence groups in more than 120 countries. V-Day now raises "more money than any group in the world to stop violence against women," Ensler has written, "four to six million every year, which is the cost of 10 minutes of the war in Iraq."

Visiting New Orleans this week with several members of her V-Day team, Ensler said she expects the April events to attract attendance "between 30,000 and 40,000."

"Every year, we have our major V-Day event in a different city, focusing on women's problems in that city," Ensler said. "There are so many reasons to have it in New Orleans, from the vanishing wetlands to the man-made levee failures that flooded the city to the abandonment and complete neglect of human beings. Violence against women was committed physically, economically and environmentally. And the women of New Orleans, the 'Katrina Warriors,' totally understand that."

"In New Orleans, Katrina exposed what was going on here, the lack of resources, the lack of care for its poor in general and its women in particular. And we are finally seeing people standing up and saying 'No' to this, to the destruction and desecration of a city and its people. Our government is so concerned with 'securing the world,' they have forgotten to protect their own people. They have made the people here profoundly unsafe."

"As a result of disaster, I think we are seeing a profound change happening in New Orleans, a shift in perception, and we want to continue shining a spotlight on that."

There will also be a disbursement of money to local, sustainable, long-term projects for women in the arts and business.

In addition to the all-star staging of "The Vagina Monologues," Ensler has nurtured and served as dramaturge to a local production that will be featured in the Superdome April 11. Called "Swimming Upstream," it tells the storm stories of local women.

"We came down here several months after the storm and saw women who were already addressing problems in a variety of ways," Ensler said. "Carole Bebelles, (the director) of the Ashe Cultural Arts Center, had gotten a group of women active in the cultural community together, who had already started meeting to talk about their feelings in relation to the storm. Then they started writing about them, from three perspectives: before the storm, during the storm and after the storm."

Included in this group are Carol Sloane, Troi Bechet ("who has written some wonderful songs," Ensler said), Karen Kaia-Livers, Carol Sutton, Adella Gautier, Kathy Randels, Dollie Rivas, Anne-Liese Juge-Fox, Tommye Myrick and Dina Roubeze.

Just last week, Kenny Leon -- who directed August Wilson's final play, "Radio Golf," on Broadway, was long associated with the Alliance Theater Company in Atlanta and now has his own group, The True Colors Theater Company in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. -- came to a reading of a first draft of the work, assembled by Ensler.

Leon will direct "Swimming Upstream" here and the plan is to take it beyond New Orleans. Several national theater artists also may be involved.

"The intention," Bebelles said, "is to have the voices of New Orleans women heard and to create a work that will last, that will tour, that will bring continuing attention to what we have faced and are still facing here.

"The fact is that when anything like this happens, women have the harder struggle. They are the ones who hold up the men, the children and elders of the family. With Katrina, it was convincing their families that they were going to make it, to keep going until we could get to a place where we could catch our breath and see the situation more clearly.

"We have had the time now to ruminate and tell this complex story with perspective. Theater allows you to do this. This is no sound bite. It has been a year in the making. We have created exciting theater, with the help of two theatrical dynamos -- Eve and now Kenny Leon.

"The thing I like about it," Carol Sutton said, "is that it is an uplifting, inspiring piece, with a lot of humor in it."

"It's still a work in progress," said Dollie Rivas, "but we were encouraged to let everything out."

Troi Bechet, the actress-singer, has written four songs and one, "Going Back Home," allowed her to unleash a lot of feelings she said she hadn't allowed herself to express since the storm. "It's about not letting tragedy wash away all the things that our city means to us," she said, "what makes this home. It speaks to what we love about the city and about the strength and fortitude we need to move forward.

"All of us involved in 'Swimming Upstream' feel a need and a responsibility to help bring this city back," Bechet said. "And at the first reading of the play, you could feel that spirit embodied in everyone in the room. We, as creators of music, art and theater, need to let the world know what this city really is. Our story needs to continue to be told, because it's going to take years to recover."

"What Eve told us was, 'Write what's true,' " said Anne-Liese Juge Fox. "She has a way of creating an atmosphere of intimacy immediately. And with so many different kinds of women contributing, you meet people you might otherwise never have met, hear stories you wouldn't otherwise have heard. And Eve knows that there's a power in this."

"Even at this stage, I can see that 'Swimming Upstream' is going to be beautiful," Ensler said. "And it's happened the way all this work has happened, with women talking and sharing with each other at a grass-roots level."

Ensler's work involves constant travel and 14-hour work days, "eight to 10 of those hours on V-Day," she said. Does it allow her a personal life?

"My love is my work," she said, "and my work is empowering women. My life is taken. But I have people I love and who love me in different parts of the world. (Among them is stepson Dylan McDermott and her two grandchildren.)

"I'm on the road 90 percent of the time and wherever I am, I feel I'm home. I can't tell you how fantastic, how freeing this is.

"The more I do this work, the less of me there is and the better I feel. By taking my life, it has given me a life.

"If you put something out there, something will come back."

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CURTAIN LINES: "Saying the word I was not supposed to say is the thing that gave me a voice in the world."

-- Eve Ensler, in her introduction to the 10th anniversary edition of "The Vagina Monologues."

**'Vagina Monologues' Author Fights Atrocities in Congo**  
**Associated Press, August 22, 2007**

NEW YORK - Eve Ensler has just returned from hell.

That's how the author of "The Vagina Monologues" describes her trip to Congo, where tens of thousands of women have been sexually attacked and mutilated in the African nation's civil war.

The 54-year-old playwright has joined with the United Nations in a campaign against what a U.N. expert called the worst violence against women in the world.

"In Congo, you're talking about a situation where Africans are hurting Africans, black people are hurting black people," Ensler told The Associated Press in an interview from Italy. "And it's harder to make people care. People say, 'Oh, it's just Africa.' And nobody is held accountable."

She spent weeks at the Panzi Hospital in the city of Bukavu, in eastern Congo, where Dr. Denis Mukwege is helping to repair the broken bodies of some war victims. The hospital sees about 3,500 women a year suffering fistula and other severe genital injuries.

A U.N. human rights expert said last month that the sexual atrocities in Congo's volatile province of South Kivu extend "far beyond rape" and include sexual slavery, forced incest and cannibalism.

From Geneva, Yakin Erturk called the situation the worst she had ever seen as the global body's special investigator for violence against women. She blamed Uganda-backed militias that occupy Congo's Ituri region, as well as the nation's armed forces and national police.

Erturk will report her findings in September to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

"How do I tell you of girls as young as 9 raped by gangs of soldiers, of women whose insides were blown apart by rifle blasts and whose bodies now leak uncontrollable streams of urine and feces?" Ensler asks in an article in the September issue of Glamour magazine.

The International Criminal Court in the Hague is now considering indictments in connection with the atrocities. The court's probe started in 2004, instigated by Congo's president, Joseph Kabila.

Ensler is asking people to write letters to Kabila, demanding that he take stronger action to stop the attacks. Hundreds of letters already have arrived at the United Nations, which is forwarding them to the African leader, Ensler said.

She is working to raise both awareness and funds for the women through the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict and through V-Day, a global movement she founded to stop violence against women and girls.

V-Day was inspired by the overwhelming audience response to "The Vagina Monologues," an award-winning play in which actors share anecdotes about their bodies that reveal heartbreaking and hilarious glimpses of their souls.

The V-Day movement has raised over \$40 million in the past decade, funding thousands of community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Kenya, Egypt and Iraq, as well as the United States.

Funds Ensler helps raise for Congo will go to the hospital, as well as to establish a safe haven called "City of Joy."

Her journey to Congo in May was inspired by a conversation she had with Mukwege last December in New York, where he spoke about his work\_ "sewing up women's vaginas as fast as the mad militiamen are ripping them apart," as Ensler describes it.

Their friendship "began with my rusty French and his limited English," she wrote. "It began with the quiet anguish in his bloodshot eyes, eyes that seemed to me to be bleeding from the horrors he'd witnessed."

**Women Left For Dead—And The Man Who's Saving Them**  
**GLAMOUR, August, 2007**

In the Congo, where tens of thousands of women are brutally raped every year, Dr. Denis Mukwege repairs their broken bodies and souls. Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues*, visits him and finds hope amid the horror.

By Eve Ensler

Dr. Mukwege with some of his patients at Panzi Hospital

I have just returned from hell. I am trying for the life of me to figure out how to communicate what I have seen and heard in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. How do I convey these stories of atrocities without your shutting down, quickly turning the page or feeling too disturbed?

How do I tell you of girls as young as nine raped by gangs of soldiers, of women whose insides were blown apart by rifle blasts and whose bodies now leak uncontrollable streams of urine and feces?

This journey was a departure for me. It began with a man, Dr. Denis Mukwege, and a conversation we had in New York City in December 2006, when he came to speak about his work helping women at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. It began with my rusty French and his limited English. It began with the quiet anguish in his bloodshot eyes, eyes that seemed to me to be bleeding from the horrors he'd witnessed.

Something happened in this conversation that compelled me to go halfway around the world to visit the doctor, this holy man who was sewing up women as fast as the mad militiamen could rip them apart.

I am going to tell the stories of the patients he saves so that the faceless, generic, raped women of war become Alfonsine and Nadine—women with names and memories and dreams. I am going to ask you to stay with me, to open your hearts, to be as outraged and nauseated as I felt sitting in Panzi Hospital in faraway Bukavu.

Before I went to the Congo, I'd spent the past 10 years working on V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls. I'd traveled to the rape mines of the world, places like Bosnia, Afghanistan and Haiti, where rape has been used as a tool of war. But nothing I ever experienced felt as ghastly, terrifying and complete as the sexual torture and attempted destruction of the female species here. It is not too strong to call this a femicide, to say that the future of the Congo's women is in serious jeopardy.

I learned from my trip that there are men who take their sorrow and helplessness and destroy women's bodies—and there are others with the same feelings who devote their lives to healing and serving. I do not know all the reasons men end up in one or the other of these groups, but I do know that one good man can create many more. One good man can inspire other men to ache for women, to fight for them and protect them. One good man can win the trust of a community of raped women—and in doing so, keep their faith in humanity alive.

Dr. Mukwege picks me up at 6:30 A.M. It is a lush, clean morning. Eastern Congo, where Panzi Hospital is located, is wildly fertile. You can almost hear the vegetation growing. There are banana trees and cartoon-colored birds. And there is Lake Kivu, a vast body of water that contains enough methane to power a good portion of the sub-Saharan—yet the city of Bukavu on its banks has only sporadic electricity. This is a theme in the Congo. There are more natural resources than almost anywhere else on the planet, yet 80 percent of the people make less than a dollar a day. More rain falls than one can imagine, but for millions, clean drinking water is scarce. The earth is gorgeously abundant, and yet almost one third of the population is starving.

As we drive along the semblance of road, the doctor tells me how different things were when he was a child. "In the sixties 50,000 people lived here in Bukavu. It was a relaxed place. There were rich people who had speedy boats in the lakes. There were gorillas in the mountains." Now there are at least a million displaced Congolese, many of whom arrive in the city daily, fleeing the numerous armed groups that have ravaged the countryside since fighting erupted in 1996. What started as a civil war to overthrow dictator Mobutu Sese Seko soon became "Africa's first world war," as observers have called it, with soldiers from neighboring countries joining in the mayhem. The troops have various agendas: Many are fighting for control of the region's extraordinary mineral wealth. Others are out to grab whatever they can get.

But you have to go back further than 1996 to understand what is going on in the Congo today. This country has been tortured for more than 120 years, beginning with King Leopold II of Belgium, who "acquired" the Congo and, between 1885 and 1908, exterminated an estimated 10 million people, about half the population. The violent consequences of genocide and colonialism have had a profound impact on the psyche of the Congolese. Despite a 2003 peace agreement and recent elections, armed groups continue to terrorize the eastern half of the country. Overall the war has left nearly 4 million people dead—more than in any other conflict since World War II—and resulted in the rape of hundreds of thousands of women and girls.

In Bukavu, the people escaping the fighting walk from early morning to late at night. They walk and walk, searching for a way to buy or sell a tomato, or for a banana for their baby. It is a relentless river of humans, anxious and hungry. "People used to eat three meals a day," says Dr. Mukwege. "Now they are lucky to eat one."

Everyone knows the doctor, an ob-gyn. He waves and stops to inquire about this person's health, that person's mother. Most doctors, teachers and lawyers fled the Congo after the wars started. It never occurred to Dr. Mukwege to leave his people at their most desperate hour.

He first became aware of the epidemic of rape in 1996. "I saw women who had been raped in an extremely barbaric way," he recalls. "First, the women were raped in front of their children, their husbands and neighbors. Second, the rapes were done by many men at the same time. Third, not only were the women raped, but their vaginas were mutilated with guns and sticks. These situations show that sex was being used as a weapon that is cheap.

"When rape is done in front of your family," he continues, "it destroys everyone. I have seen men suffer who watched their wives raped; they are not mentally stable anymore. The children are in even worse condition. Most of the time, when a woman suffers this much violence, she is not able to bear children afterward. Clearly these rapes are not done to satisfy any sexual desire but to destroy the soul. The whole family and community are broken."

We arrive at Panzi Hospital, a spread-out complex of about a dozen buildings. Eight years ago Dr. Mukwege created a special maternity ward here with an operating room. Panzi as a whole has 334 beds, 250 of which now hold female victims of sexual violence. The hospital and its surrounding property have become, essentially, a village of raped women. The grounds are overwhelmed with children and hunger and need. Every day at least two children here die from malnutrition. Then there are the many problems that result from severe trauma: women with nightmares and insomnia, women rejected by their husbands, women who have no interest in nurturing the babies of their rapists, women and children with nowhere to go.

It is early morning, and the hospital courtyard has been transformed into a temporary church. Women dressed in their most colorful, or perhaps only, *pagne* (a six-yard piece of brightly patterned cloth that can be wrapped into a dress or skirt) sit waiting for the doctor to arrive and lead the prayer service that begins each day. A dedicated staff of female nurses and social workers are there as well, dressed in their starched white jackets. There is singing, a combination of Pentecostal calls and Swahili rhythms, Sunday-morning voices calling up Jesus.

This morning service is a kind of daily gathering of strength and unity. When the women sing, everything else seems to disappear. They are with the sun, the sky, the drums, each other. They are alive in their bodies, momentarily safe and free.

As they sing, Dr. Mukwege tells me stories about the women in the chorus. Many were naked when they arrived, or starving. Many were so badly damaged he is amazed they are singing at all. He takes enormous pride in their recovery. "I will never be ashamed," the women sing. "God gave me a new heart that I can be very strong."

"At the beginning I used to hear patients' stories," Dr. Mukwege tells me. "Now I abstain." I soon understand why. I meet Nadine (like others in this story, she agreed to be photographed, but asked that her name be changed, as she could be subject to reprisals for speaking out), who tells me a tale so horrendous it will haunt me for years to come.

When we begin talking, Nadine seems utterly disassociated from her surroundings—far away. "I'm 29," she begins. "I am from the village of Nindja. Normally there was insecurity in our area. We would hide many nights in the bush. The soldiers found us there. They killed our village chief and his children. We were 50 women. I was with my three children and my older brother; they told him to have sex with me. He refused, so they cut his head and he died."

Nadine's body is trembling. It is hard to believe these words are coming out of a woman who is still alive and breathing. She tells me how one of the soldiers forced her to drink his urine and eat his feces, how the soldiers killed 10 of her friends and then murdered her children: her four-year-old and two-year-old boys and her one-year-old girl. "They flung my baby's body on the ground like she was garbage," Nadine says. "One after another they raped me. From that my vagina and anus were ripped apart."

Nadine holds onto my hand as if she were drowning in a tsunami of memory. As devastated as she is, it is clear that she needs to be telling this story, needs me to listen to what she is saying. She closes her eyes and says something I cannot believe I'm hearing. "One of the soldiers cut open a pregnant woman," she says. "It was a mature baby and they killed it. They cooked it and forced us to eat it."

Incredibly, Nadine was the only one of the 50 women to escape. "When I got away from the soldiers, there was a man passing. He said, 'What is that bad smell?' It was me; because of my wounds, I couldn't control my urine or feces. I explained what had happened. The man wept right there. He and some others brought me to the Panzi Hospital."

She stops. Neither of us has breathed. Nadine looks at me, longing for me to make sense of what she's related. She says, "When I got here I had no hope. But this hospital helped me so much. Whenever I thought about what happened, I became mad. I believed I would lose my mind. I asked God to kill me. Dr. Mukwege told me: Maybe God didn't want me to lose my life."

Nadine later tells me that the doctor was right. As she fled the slaughter, she says, she saw an infant lying on the ground next to her slain parents. Nadine rescued the girl; now having a child to care for gives her reason to keep going. "I can't go back to my

village. It's too dangerous. But if I had a place to live I could go to school. I lost my children but I'm raising this child as my own. This girl is my future."

I stay for a week at Panzi. Women line up to tell me their stories. They come into the interview numb, distant, glazed over, dead. They leave alive, grateful, empowered. I begin to understand that the deepest wound for them is the sense that they have been forgotten, that they are invisible and that their suffering has no meaning. The simple act of listening to them has enormous impact. The slightest touch or kindness restores their faith and energy. The strength of these women is remarkable, as is their unparalleled resiliency. Dr. Mukwege tells me I need to meet Alfonsine (her name also has been changed). "Her story really touched me," he says. "Her body, her case is the worst I have ever seen, but she has given us all courage."

Alfonsine is thin and poised, profoundly calm. She tells me she was walking through the forest when she encountered a lone soldier. "He followed me and then forced me to lie down. He said he would kill me. I struggled with him hard; it went on for a long time. Then he went for his rifle, pressed it on the outside of my vagina and shot his entire cartridge into me. I just heard the voice of bullets. My clothes were glued to me with blood. I passed out."

Dr. Mukwege tells me, "I never saw such destruction. Her colon, bladder, vagina and rectum were basically gone. She had lost her mind. I was sure she wouldn't make it. I rebuilt her bladder. Sometimes you don't even know where you are going. There's no map. I operated on her six times, and then I sent her to Ethiopia so they could heal the incontinence problem, and they did."

"I was in bed when I first met Dr. Mukwege," Alfonsine says. "He caressed my face. I lived at Panzi for six months. He helped me spiritually. He showed me how many times God makes miracles. He built me up morally."

I look at Alfonsine's petite body and imagine the scars beneath her humble white clothes. I imagine the reconstructed flesh, the agony she experienced after being shot. I listen carefully. I cannot detect a drop of bitterness or any desire for revenge. Instead, her attention is fixed on transforming the future. She tells me with great pride, "I am now studying to be a nurse. My first choice is to work at Panzi. It was the nurses who nurtured me day after day, who loved me back into living."

Alfonsine has ambitions that go beyond Panzi: "I feel like a big person in my community; I can do something for my people. Women must lead our country. They know the way."

Every day about a dozen new women arrive at Panzi Hospital. Most come for surgery to repair a fistula, a rip in their internal tissue. There are two types of fistulas seen here: One is the aftermath of brutal rape, the other the result of birth complications, something that could be prevented if there were adequate maternity health care. These obstetric fistulas are the result of abnormal tearing during the birth process. Many occur when women flee the militias while they are in labor; there is no time to give birth, and the baby dies inside. The women who make it here are the lucky ones. They limp on homemade canes made from tree branches; they trudge slowly in deep pain. Some have walked 40 miles. Because it takes so long to get to the hospital, women have no chance to receive the anti-HIV medications that must be taken within 48 hours after rape. Health experts fear that in a few years, there will be an explosion of AIDS in the Congo.

Dr. Mukwege was once the only doctor at Panzi Hospital able to perform fistula surgery; now he has trained four others. The hospital does 1,000 such operations a year.

I sit in on a typical operation in a clean, safe, but seriously underequipped operating room (nurses use torn pieces of a green dressing gown to tie the woman's ankles to the stirrups). I am able to see the fistula—a hole in the tissue between the woman's vaginal wall and bladder. A hole in her body. A hole in her soul. A hole where her confidence, her esteem, her spirit, her light, her urine leak out.

Because of the prevalence of fistulas, the Panzi complex is soaked in urine. The smell pervades everything. Pee spills out of women in a huge, dirt-floored hangarlike space where hundreds sit all day. Pee spills out in classrooms, leaving puddles on the floor. The women are always wet. Their legs chafe and their skin burns. There are many little girls in pee-stained dresses roaming around Panzi; shy and ashamed, they, too, are victims of rape. The week of my visit, a state agency had turned off the water for the hospital after billing Panzi \$70,000 (an insane amount by Congolese standards) because it heard that the hospital, which is private, was receiving money from the West. Staff had to bring in buckets of water from the surrounding neighborhood. To have hundreds of women with fistula-caused incontinence and no water seemed like a crime upon a crime.

I can't help wondering what happened in Dr. Mukwege's life that compelled him to work here, sometimes 14 hours a day. "I was born in Bukavu on March 1, 1955," he tells me. "During my young age my mother was suffering with asthma. In the night when she became ill, I was the one who would go and look for a nurse or bring her medication. We all thought she would die. Even now, each birthday she celebrates, I am so happy to see her alive.

"My father was a pastor. He was very gentle, very human. From him I got the caring to treat patients. When we would go and visit sick people together, he would pray. I would ask, 'Why can't you give them tablets or prescriptions?' He said, 'I am not a doctor.' I decided then that prayer is not enough. People must take things into their own hands. Asking God does not change

anything. He gives us the ability to say yes or no. You must use your hands, your mind. When I receive women here who are hungry, I can't say, 'God bless you.' I have to give them something to eat. When someone is suffering, I can't tell her about God, I have to treat her pain. You can't hide yourself in religion. Not a solution."

Dr. Mukwege began as a general practitioner, focusing on pediatrics. When he worked in a clinic in Lamera, a village south of Bukavu, he saw dreadful things happening in maternity. "Women were coming in bleeding day after day, many with severe infections. A woman had a baby and carried it dead in her vagina for a week. It was terrible. This helped me make a total engagement in a new career."

He went back to school to study gynecology in Angers, France, and then returned to Lamera to train the staff in obstetrics and gynecology. After he moved to Bukavu he created a special maternity ward at Panzi. Women who were victims of extreme sexual violence began to arrive. The number grew every day.

Who was—and is—raping the women? The better question might be, who isn't?

The perpetrators include the Interahamwe, the Hutu fighters who fled neighboring Rwanda in 1994 after committing genocide there; the Congolese army; a loose assortment of armed civilians; even U.N. peacekeepers. Christine Schuler Deschryver, who works for a German aid organization and is a fierce advocate for Panzi Hospital and Congolese women, says, "All of them are raping women. It is a country sport. Any person in uniform is an enemy to women."

Many women do not even report the violations, because they are afraid of rejection by their husbands and families. Although there are laws against rape in the Congo, if a woman reports her rape and her rapist is arrested, he can pay his way out and come back and rape her again. Or murder her.

Dr. Mukwege, in contrast, is motivating a different kind of healing army. I speak with a hospital employee named Bonane. "I was in Uganda," he says. "I saw the doctor on TV. He was explaining the atrocities. I realized these are my mothers and sisters. I was so inspired, I came here to work with him."

Dr. Mukwege is married with five children, but his brother, Herman, tells me his family doesn't see him much because his devotion to the women has consumed his life. Although the doctor's energy never flags, I notice an underlying exhaustion in his face and his being, a sleepless despair that comes from dwelling constantly amid violence and cruelty. He says to me, "When you rape a woman, you destroy life and you destroy your own life. Animals don't do this. When a pigeon has sex with another pigeon, it is kind. I am wondering how man has the power of such destruction."

And yet, the status of women in the Congo was dismal long before the wars started. The women work all day in the field and market, carrying the Congo on their backs (sometimes up to 200 pounds in bags strapped to their foreheads). They prepare the dinner, wash the clothes, clean the house, take care of the children, have mandatory sex with their husbands. They have no power, no rights and no value. Many women I talk to ask why I am "wasting my time" with them.

I interview a man who is the keeper of a gorilla preserve. He tells me that when dangerous militias began staking out territory in the park, he went to their commanders and asked if their soldiers would work with him to protect the gorillas. In the end they all agreed. I ask him why he didn't feel compelled to do the same for the women. The question surprised him. He had no answer.

I ask the doctor about the Congo's leader, Joseph Kabila, who in November 2006 became the country's first democratically elected president in 46 years and promised to be the "craftsman of peace." Are things getting better?

Dr. Mukwege sighs. "Kabila," he says, "has done nothing. The fighting here in the east has not stopped. During 2004 my life was threatened; I got phone calls warning me to stop my work or die. The calls have ceased, but it is still very dangerous.

"Visitors come from the international community," he continues. "They eat sandwiches and cry, but they do not come back with help. Even President Kabila has never put his foot here. His wife was here. She wept, but she has done nothing."

UNICEF, ECHO (the humanitarian aid office of the European Commission) and PMU (a Swedish humanitarian organization) are the major supporters of Panzi. Although the hospital can always use more money, the real need is for a political response to the violence. Barring that, Dr. Mukwege would at least like to get real protection for the women once they leave the hospital. "I patch them up and send them back home," he says, "but there is no guarantee they will not be raped again. There have been several cases where women have come back a second time, more destroyed than the first."

On my last day, the doctor asks me if I will lead some exercises for the women that will help alleviate their trauma. We go to the hangarlike building where 250 depressed and sick women are waiting. We begin with breathing. Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Then we attach a noise to the breath. Other noises follow. One after another, noise after noise. Then we attach a movement. There is stomping. There is punching. There is mad waving of arms. The women are up on their feet, screaming, releasing guttural

sounds of sorrow, rage, terror. In a matter of minutes, I watch them go from broken, mute women to wild, laughing, ferocious beings.

In the midst of this energy, Dr. Mukwege challenges the women to a dance contest. Celebration and power explode from their bodies. A part of each woman is fierce, unbreakable. No one has killed their spirits. The doctor whispers to me, "When I see this joy, this life in the women, I know why I must come back here every day."

The women's frenzy builds and builds. They dance in the hot African sun. They dance in the open road. They literally dance us up a steep hill, hundreds of women and children moving in a single, radiant feminine mass.

If 250 women who have been raped, torn, starved and tortured can find the strength to dance us up a mountain, surely the rest of us can find the resources and will to guarantee their future.

### **Wartime Victim Makes Heartfelt Plea For Redress Los Angeles Times, July 21, 2007**

Carefully walking up to the podium, Yong-Soo Lee, a former sex slave for the Japanese Imperial Army in World War II, faced American church leaders at Wilshire Presbyterian Church.

She bowed deeply to pay her respects.

Then Lee, immaculate in white Korean attire of ramie, gave a capsule testimony of her abduction during the war, when she was 16, and the unspeakable pain and degradation she suffered. More than 100 Presbyterian pastors, elders and other church officials attending the July 14 meeting in Los Angeles of the Pacific Presbytery listened with rapt attention. The presbytery is a regional governing body of the 2.3-million-member Presbyterian Church (USA).

"Please help us," Lee said, speaking through an interpreter. "Please support House Resolution 121," she added, concluding her remarks with another bow. HR 121, approved 39-2 by the House Foreign Affairs Committee last month, calls on Japan to formally apologize and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women and girls into sexual slavery. It also calls on the Japanese government to pay reparations.

Kevin Iga, an elder from Malibu Presbyterian Church who was at the meeting, said Lee's visit was helpful because it put a human face on the issue. Iga, an associate professor of mathematics at Pepperdine University, said he wants the full House to approve the measure. For many attendees, Lee's appearance gave added meaning to the meeting because Wilshire Presbyterian and Church of Peace, a Korean congregation, were co-hosts. By seeing her, attendees said, they could empathize with the burdens of fellow Korean Christians.

During the three-hour meeting, combining business with worship, attendees sang two hymns in both languages. A Korean American praise and worship group played one song with traditional Korean musical instruments to underscore the importance of the partnership. The Communion was conducted bilingually, with the Rev. Kee Dae Kim, pastor of Church of Peace, speaking in Korean, and the Rev. Charles Robertson, pastor of Wilshire Presbyterian, speaking in English.

Veterans of presbytery meetings said that they had never seen so many Koreans participating. Presbytery officials were careful to note, however, that Lee's visit was initiated by hosting pastors, not the presbytery, which has not taken a formal stand on the resolution. Kim and Robertson are active in social justice issues and are supporters of HR 121.

Even as proponents of the measure are pushing Congress to get the resolution passed, a Japanese group consisting of a dozen parliamentarians and scores of politicians, nationalist intellectuals and historians is urging the House to retract the proposal, claiming that the resolution is based on "wrong information" and contradicts "historical fact." In March, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe roused a storm of protest with his denial of allegations of sexual slavery and his contention that the women were professional prostitutes paid for their services.

Under the auspices of a group calling itself the 121 Coalition, Lee flew to Washington, D.C., from Seoul to denounce Abe during his April visit to the White House. "I did not get paid," said Lee in an interview after her talk. "How long will Japanese officials continue to lie when witnesses like me are still living?" Lee is a woman with a mission. At 78, she is among the youngest survivors, so she feels added responsibility to speak out. Taken to China and Taiwan with a group of teenage girls, Lee was repeatedly raped, beaten and even tortured with electrical cords when she fought back, she said.

Serving an average of five soldiers a day, she was infected with venereal disease and suffered for many years. When the war was over, she returned to her hometown, but told no one — not even her mother — about what happened.

It wasn't until 1992, after the formation of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan in Seoul, that she dared to speak about her past. A convert to Catholicism, she is sustained by her faith, she said. "God is good to me," she said. "He hears my prayers all the time." In April, on the day of the 121 Coalition's protest against Abe in the nation's capital, it looked like it might rain. "So, I prayed to God to help clear the clouds," she said. "He did," she said with a big smile, "and very quickly too." Her daily routine when she gets up is to stand before a full-length mirror in her apartment.

"I look at the mirror and smile," she said. "When I see the woman in the mirror smiling, too, I say, 'Hey Yong-Soo, let's be joyful today. Let's make today a joyful day.'" She'll never know this side of heaven why a loving God allowed her and so many other innocent people to suffer, she said. But she can live with the mystery of what only God knows, she said. On display in the Wilshire church's patio, where she was interviewed, was an exhibit of photographs of paintings and drawings by a former sex slave.

One depicted a uniformed soldier pulling a girl with a braid by her hair, with the caption: "It was a day of nightmare. No, it was the beginning of it. I was 15, when I was taken away." Another showed a ship filled with girls with sad eyes, with the caption, "No one said where we're heading." The exhibit also included rare photographs taken during wartime of the sex slaves. The artist who did the paintings died three years ago, Lee said. They are another reminder, she said, of why she must carry on. She is not worried about the efforts in Japan to help scuttle the House resolution. "What is right will prevail," she said.

Paul M. Yun, a professor of mathematics at El Camino College and a member of the 121 Coalition, said what makes the current campaign different from similar past efforts is the involvement of many religious groups. "It's an interfaith effort," he said, noting that Catholics, Protestants and Buddhists are working on the project. Yun, a member of St. Francis Korean Catholic Center in Torrance, where Lee spoke on Sunday, said 19 Korean Catholic congregations raised \$6,000 to pay for her travel expenses. Lee, who had not set foot inside an American church until this visit, said she was honored and humbled by the experience.

"How honored I am," she said. "Imagine telling our story to such a distinguished group and to be allowed to stand where pastors preach. I will always remember."

### **"Eve Ensler, the Original 'Vagina Warrior,' Organizes Arts Festival" The New York Times June 12, 2006**

It is the next level of the vagina franchise. Eve Ensler, the author of the continually performed "Vagina Monologues," was at a meeting in her Manhattan loft last week, discussing her ambitious arts festival, beginning today, focused on violence against women. Laptops and organizers at attention, the vagina warriors, as they call themselves, updated Ms. Ensler on everything from the publicity for the dozens of theater, music, film and community events to massages for participants from overseas. "Has everyone heard that we'll have 10 days at Yankee Stadium?" Ms. Ensler asked, referring to an agreement to flash "Until the Violence Stops: NYC" and a message from male supporters on the stadium's giant digital screen. "You should throw out the first pitch," someone piped up. "Yeah," another woman said. "We can say something about learning to pitch like a girl." Although the room dissolved into laughter, Ms. Ensler was putting into motion her dream of saturating the city with her anti-violence message. (Red and pink advertisements for the campaign "to make New York City the safest place on earth for girls and women" have dotted subways for weeks now.) The festival expands the V-Day franchise, the global movement that Ms. Ensler ignited back in 1998 with benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues," her play about women and their bodies. That cultish 1996 Off Broadway show ultimately morphed into a nonprofit charity that has so far raised more than \$35 million for programs designed to end violence against women. Worth magazine, in 2001, named V-Day one of the 100 best charities. Although "Monologues" has occasionally raised outcries from conservatives who complain that it promotes homosexuality and underage sex, performances have become something of a staple on college campuses. This year alone 1,150 colleges and communities put together 2,700 V-Day events, occurring on or near Feb. 14, Valentine's Day. "The best time to act is when you're at a place of success, you have the energy to go forth," Ms. Ensler said later over coffee. At 53, with her signature dark bob haircut, she looks much the same as she did when she first channeled many women's experiences for "Monologues." "The way you get people to deal with something is to saturate them with it. I can feel everywhere in the city that I go that people are talking about it, thinking about it." The power of her Rolodex - all the festival celebrities and artists perform free - can be seen in the schedule: Jane Fonda, Kathy Bates, Marian Seldes and Kerry Washington read Ms. Ensler's play "Necessary Targets," about women and war, this evening at Studio 54. Tomorrow women from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq and, yes, New Orleans will discuss the play and kick off a V-Day campaign for women in "conflict zones." Friday through Sunday there is a film festival at the Museum of the City of New York and the Museum of Television and Radio; on June 27, a co-ed run in Prospect Park. And on June 19, the Hammerstein Ballroom (where the first benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues" raised \$250,000 for New York City anti-violence groups in 1998) will be the site of "A Memory, a

Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer,” a series of works by writers including Edward Albee, Michael Eric Dyson and Anna Deavere Smith with scheduled performances by Brittany Murphy, Cynthia Nixon, Isabella Rossellini, Marlo Thomas, Rosario Dawson and others. Some events are free, other have tickets that start at \$10. (The schedule is large and changing daily; vday.org has up-to-date details.)

The programming isn’t the only thing that’s big. The V-Day campaign has scooped up issues from rape to domestic violence to genital mutilation. That kind of wide-ranging do-gooding inspired the headline of a 2002 article in The New York Times Magazine about Ms. Ensler: “Eve Ensler Wants to Save the World.”

Ms. Ensler doesn’t worry about being considered grandiose. “When I started this 10 years ago, no one said the word ‘vagina,’ “ she said. “Let’s start there. Something has shifted in people.

“We started with 25 colleges that did productions of ‘The Vagina Monologues.’ Now there are 700. We’ve opened safe houses for girls in Africa, Egypt, South Dakota native lands, Iraq. We’ve supported school and orphanages in Afghanistan.

“People think you’re crazy when you have dreams. Who cares if people think you’re crazy? So what. Because you know what, I’ve seen changes.”

And she is planning more. She said she wants to bring the festival to Chicago and a handful of other cities. In October her nonfiction book, “Insecure at Last: Losing It in a Security-Obsessed World” (Random House) is due out. And for the 10th anniversary of V-Day, she envisions a celebration at the Superdome in New Orleans.

For the two-week festival in New York, Ms. Ensler and her skeleton crew (no office, seven or eight paid staffers, a well-connected advisory board) raised about \$1.2 million.

Jerri Lynn Fields, the executive director of V-Day, said the vagina warriors were able to jump-start the campaign because of their enormous base. They went on a retreat in July, she said, and began brainstorming about Ms. Ensler’s dream of connecting all the strands of her work. The campaign didn’t get any funds until December 2005, when the Rockefeller Foundation gave \$500,000, followed by a contribution from Verizon and other sponsors, Ms. Fields said. Grass-roots groups are sponsoring most of the more than 50 festival events.

Dana Edell, 30, the co-founder and executive director of the viBe Theater Experience, which produces plays by teenage girls, recalled putting on her first production of “Monologues” five years ago, as a student at Columbia University. During the festival, her company and Here Arts Center will produce 12 performances by youths working against violence.

“It’s so much bigger than a women’s movement now,” Ms. Edell said. “It’s about communities speaking about all the darkness and violence in neighborhoods that doesn’t get expressed. I can’t name another artist or activist besides Eve Ensler who has gotten more attention to this. She’s found a way to make this accessible, entertaining and moving.”

Eryka Peskin, 32, a writer and social worker, said Ms. Ensler and last year’s V-Day inspired her to found the Red Tent Women’s Project, a community center in Park Slope, Brooklyn. For the festival, Red Tent is doing several things, including producing a play about domestic violence. As it turns out, Ms. Ensler’s biggest resource may well be the women she has inspired over the years who are now rallying to support the festival. As Ms. Peskin said, “I want to be Eve Ensler when I grow up.”

### **“Ensler Turns New York Into Anti-Violence Showcase”**

**Women’s eNews June 20, 2006**

New York City is in the middle of a 16-day, 60-event festival produced by V-Day, a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. An emphasis on women in war zones provides a preview of the group’s fundraising intentions for 2007.

NEW YORK (WOMENSENEWS)--Over the next two weeks, Eve Ensler’s V-Day--which is both an organization the playwright founded and a movement she inspired--is turning New York City into a stage for examining and publicizing issues connected to violence against women.

Sixty events across all of the city’s five boroughs have been scheduled between June 12 and June 29 under the single banner “Until the Violence Stops,” the name of Ensler’s 2003 Emmy Award-winning documentary about the impact of V-Day in five communities around the world.

There are film screenings, a quilt exhibit, panel discussions about women in conflict zones and a workshop led by actor Victor Rivers by and for men that looks at ending attacks against women, among other events.

There is even the first performance of Ensler’s “Vagina Monologues” in a prison. V-Day, in conjunction with the Lotus Project-Women in Prison Wellness Program, an advocacy group for female inmates, will stage the performance on June 23 at 6 p.m. at the Riker’s Island Correctional Center.

“We want the V-day festival to stop New Yorkers in their tracks and have them thinking about the issue and actively engaging in it through theater, art and community,” says Susan Swan, media and communications advisor for V-Day. “The outdoor messaging campaign alone will receive 370 million impressions in all five boroughs.”

“Until the Violence Stops” ads are on buses, in subways stops and at tourist attractions such as Yankee Stadium in the Bronx.

V-Day serves as an umbrella organization for the thousands of schools and organizations that stage performances of the “Vagina Monologues,” Ensler’s 1996 play about topics such as rape, masturbation and menstruation.

Since 1998, V-Day staffers say that benefit performances of the play have raised over \$35 million for efforts helping to stop violence against women and girls. In 2006 alone, the group says, V-Day fans staged more than 2,700 V-day performances.

Ensler’s V-Day group, which has headquarters in New York and a paid staff of about eight, convened an unusual variety of New York sponsors, from the iconoclastic Bitch magazine to the CBS network. The production budget for the festival was \$1.2 million.

The festival aims to raise money for a variety of New York groups. A June 21 event about women in prison, for instance, will benefit the American Civil Liberties Union and its New York counterpart, the NYCLU. A June 25 multimedia event "It's Hard Out Here For A Girl/Brooklyn Represents: Language and Sound" will benefit the Brooklyn Family Justice Center.

#### Jane Fonda Helps Open Festival

On the opening night of the festival on June 12, Jane Fonda played a leading role in the performance of Ensler's 2001 play, "Necessary Targets," about an American psychiatrist who travels to a Bosnian refugee camp to help a group of women grapple with the aftermath of war.

"This is all about ending war," Ensler told a sold-out audience for the Fonda performance at Studio 54, the theater that was a famous nightclub in the 1970s. "It began for me in Bosnia, but there are women in Iraq, Sudan and New Orleans who are the victims of violence."

Women from Burma, Sudan, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Croatia, Cambodia, Rwanda and Somalia gathered for a two-hour panel at the Ford Foundation on June 13 to discuss surviving conflict zones.

Stella Umutoni, a refugee from Rwanda who received the 2004 Voices of Courage Award and who attends New York University's School of Social Work, says the panel was cathartic. "Being in the same place with women who have gone through the same pain and torture made me feel more connected," Umutoni told Women's eNews.

Jerri Lynn Fields, executive director of V-Day, says the New York programs on women in war zones provide a preview of the 2007 V-Day season, in which colleges and organizations across the country raise money for anti-violence causes timed to Valentine's Day. "Next year, when organizations hold their V-Day performances, the money they raise will go to women around the world in conflict zones."

#### Star-Studded Program

The festival is studded with the names of such celebrities as Rosario Dawson, Cynthia Nixon, Rosie O'Donnell and Rivers. Over the past seven years, V-Day staffers estimate that Ensler has enlisted hundreds--probably close to a thousand celebrities--in V-Day events.

"I will be anywhere Eve asks me to be," said Kerry Washington, a TV and movie actor.

Many events are also community-run and organized.

A block party to raise awareness about New York state's five-year statute of limitations on rape, for instance, was hosted June 17 by Find Your Light and RightRides for Women's Safety, both New York-based organizations that work to end violence against women.

Red Tent Women's Project, a Brooklyn group that provides an urban sanctuary for women, is holding a panel of formerly incarcerated women talking about how to change the criminal justice system and putting on a play, "My Brooklyn Hamlet" by Brenda Adelman, about domestic violence.

Ensler says the goal of eradicating violence has far-reaching ripple effects. "If we stop violence, we will help eradicate classism, AIDS and poverty," she told Women's eNews.

"Violence against women affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetimes. It relates to every other issue. Violence is the mechanism that keeps women in their place and prevents them from having a voice, demanding their rights, rising up. For example, there is a profound connection between women getting AIDS and violence, between poverty and violence."

#### Replicating the Event

V-Day organizers next hope to replicate the Until the Violence Stops festival in cities across the country and world.

Mary Morten, a long-time V-Day activist and associate director of the Chicago Foundation for Women, said that the budget for Illinois includes \$500,000 to stage a replica event.

New York City officials say the V-Day event offers a welcome introduction to its own campaign against domestic violence.

"It coordinated very well with the ad campaign the city is launching in July about domestic violence," said Yolanda Jimenez, the city's commissioner to combat domestic violence.

Jimenez says the awareness building at the heart of the V-Day program is a critical component to combating violence against women in New York City and getting people to use the city's preventive services, such as hotlines.

In New York City last year, 43 of the 68 family-related homicides were female, or 63 percent, according to the mayor's office.

"We've been adding various initiatives over the last four years and we are particularly concerned about domestic violence fatalities," said Jimenez. "In 90 percent of fatality cases there is no call to the hotline."

Hannah Seligson is a freelance writer based in New York. Her book, "New Girl on the Job," will be published by Citadel Press in 2007.

### **"Vagina Warrior Agnes Pareyio Named the United Nations in Kenya Person of the Year" The Standard, October 24, 2005**

The United Nations has honoured a Kenyan for her efforts to save girls from Female Genital Mutilation and early marriages.

Mrs Agnes Pareyio is the United Nations in Kenya Person of the Year, a title she earned for her contribution towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The recognition coincides with the UN's 60th anniversary celebrations today. Pareyio is the co-ordinator of Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative (TNI), a community-based organisation in Narok District.

MDGs are a set of development targets, which all UN member states have pledged to meet by 2015. One of the goals is to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. TNI has helped girls who have chosen not to undergo circumcision and early marriage, to continue with their education.

Currently, Pareyio is facilitating the design of sustainable mechanisms for eliminating the female rite. She also provides rehabilitation for FGM victims as well as sensitising and mobilising religious groups to join her crusade.

The former councillor and Maendeleo ya Wanawake branch official started her campaign five years ago. "She walked from village to village, sensitising the community on the dangers of female circumcision and advocating for an alternative rite of passage," says a press statement from the UN information office. Her contributions have led to girls delaying early sexual activity, thus avoiding pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Dr Klaus Toepfer, director-general of UN offices in Nairobi and executive director of Unep, will present Pareyio with a commemorative plaque.

### **“Vagina Monologues to Open in Taipei” Taiwan News, March 24, 2005**

Local women's rights groups will stage the play, "The Vagina Monologues," in Taipei on Friday and Saturday, as the climax to a series "V-Day" activities that started earlier this month.

"V-Day" is a global movement that was launched in 1998 to stop violence against women and girls. This is the first year that local women's rights group have joined the worldwide campaign.

The participating local groups include the Garden of Hope Foundation, Taiwan Women's Link and Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights. The proceeds from the show will be donated to local women's rights groups to support their work in preventing domestic violence.

Chi Hui-jung, executive director of the Garden of Hope Foundation, said she hoped Taiwan's participation in the "V-Day" campaign will help local women's rights activists to promote their work in Taiwan in the future.

"This year we launched our "V-Day" activities in Taipei, and I hope this could be a good starting point to promote other activities around the country," said Chi.

The Cabinet-level Council of Cultural Affairs is one of the co-sponsors of this year's "V-Day" event.

CCA Chairman Chen Chi-nan (陳其南) said that he hopes the "V-Day" campaign will help to heighten female citizens' awareness of their civil rights.

"The CCA in recent years has been working on a 'Cultural Citizenship Movement' to encourage our citizens to develop their understanding of art and culture," Chen said. "In our society, many women still suffer the burdens of tradition that the society imposes on them, and I wish cultural activities like "V-Day" can help to promote greater awareness and prevent violence against them."

The letter "V" in "V-Day" stands for "victory," "valentine," and "vagina." Every year, productions of Eve Ensler's award-winning play "The Vagina Monologues" are staged all over the world to raise money for local anti-violence organizations.

The play will premier in Taiwan with Friday's performance.

In the past seven years, "The Vagina Monologues" has successfully raised US\$25 million toward networking around the globe to prevent domestic violence and to empower women.

The title is representative of the fact that public discussion of the vagina is taboo in many societies worldwide. Feminist activists have encouraged women to explore their own bodies in order to develop a better understanding of themselves and to achieve the objective of a better self-protection.

Ensler's play adopts the style of monologues by female actresses, delineating women's life experiences and bringing a deeper level of discussion to gender issues. Before writing the play, Ensler had conducted interviews with more than 200 women about their sexuality, their bodies and their stories of violence and sexual abuse.

Ensler's work has met with resistance in some countries, particularly those that uphold traditional patriarchal values. The play was banned in Shanghai, China in 2004 and later in Uganda in 2005.

The two performances in Taiwan will be staged at the Red House Theater in Mandarin and English on Friday and Saturday night, respectively. Both performances are sold out.

Dana Wylie, director of the English language performance in Taiwan, said though the play is internationally famous, each local performance will reflect characteristics of the local culture, as the identities of women around the world are definitely different, one from the other.

**“Can you say it?”  
The Observer, February 16, 2005**

Can you say it? Vagina.

Every year around this time, that curiously absent anatomical word floats across campus like a fad, a discovery and then disappears into the cave of annual campus events. However, this is the exact opposite of the mission of the Vagina Monologues and V-Day. Talking to Notre Dame's diverse group of Vagina Warriors, one sees beyond the clouded debate and controversy to find an energizing play, a socially vital movement and a beloved community of sisters working for a better world.

The Vagina Monologues sprang from the depths of the unspoken. Discussions surrounding female bodies, sexuality and rape are deemed either inappropriate for open discussion or unimportant. We lack spaces for discussion for these issues and for V-Day activists; this is a serious problem. The statistics are appalling - one in three women worldwide will be victims of some form of violence (battering, rape and harassment to name a few), one of four college women will experience sexual assault - attempted or completed - and more than half of these violations go unreported. V-Day Student organizer junior Kaitlyn Redfield comments, "After three years of being involved, I've come to understand that being silent on this issue is perpetuating the problem." By denying the pervasiveness of sexual assault, we isolate the victims and fail to combat the problem.

At Notre Dame, our illusions of being a "family", parietals and rules against pre-marital intercourse seem to erase from our consciousness issues of sexuality in general and sexual assault specifically. Junior Halle Kiefer sees the Monologues as a forum for victims, friends and all people concerned with violence against women to find healing and seek answers. She says, "People say rape and assault doesn't happen here, but it does, behind closed doors and people have to deal with it." It is the women and men (one of seven men experience a sexual assault) suffering in silence the Monologues aims to console and give a voice for their pain and frustration. Redfield sees Notre Dame as having a strong "culture of silence" around these issues. The Vagina Warriors in response plan awareness events, fundraisers for local sexual assault response centers and the Vagina Monologues to combat that silence and aid victims.

V-Day also is a celebration of femininity and builds solidarity among the people involved. It is completely student planned and based. Redfield was inspired seeing "college women taking action" to end sexual assault. The community created through performing the show and planning events sustains its members. Kiefer and others find a chance to meet new friends, connect more with current ones and build a positive community around important issues. V-Day meetings are chalk full of laughter, camaraderie and support, which in such a diverse group of women is revolutionary. We can learn much from the model of the vagina warriors. As they endeavor to make themselves into a focused community of respect and peace, they remake the world around them and battle a grave injustice.

To their critics, V-Day participants speak respectfully and seriously. Their mission, to end violence against women and girls worldwide, has been misconstrued in outrageous ways. Some associate their purpose with pro-choice groups. To this, Redfield says we must "divorce discussions of violence against women and abortion debates. Just because they both deal with women, it does not equate them." Notre Dame's Vagina Warriors have nothing to do with any pro-choice groups, for they are sponsored by University departments and the money they raise goes to SOS and YWCA in their ministries to victims of rape and domestic abuse. Junior Jackie Clark sees the binding of V-Day and abortion issues as a major problem. For her, "The goal of the Monologues is to promote awareness. It's a shame they are associated inappropriately".

The recurrent attacks on V-Day seem to be rooted in general misconceptions of feminism. The struggle for equality and dignity for women in public and private relationships continues. Redfield believes the boundaries between orthodox Catholicism and feminism wrongly hinder finding shared values. She holds that, "At the heart, feminism and Catholicism both share the common goal of fostering peace and promoting the recognition of dignity of women and men." Women in the movement assert their

dignity through celebrating their gendered identity, releasing frustration over shared oppression and inviting men and other women to know their joys and pains.

Now, can you say it?

The Vagina Monologues are here to educate, liberate and agitate us all to be more proactive actors in the fight to end violence against women and girls. As sophomore Casey Stanton wrote in poetic verse, "we are all responsible, we all must take up the fight, it's time to defend, a Female's Right to Life." See the show and engage the issues until the violence stops.

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer **Eve Ensler on**

### **"Good" Bodies and Bad Politics Mother Jones, October 26, 2004**

It's hard not to admire a woman who looks you in the eye and says with a beatific smile, "I love the word 'vagina.'" Yet if you're familiar with Eve Ensler's work, the statement hardly comes as a surprise -- her play *The Vagina Monologues* has, since its first staging in 1996, become a phenomenon in the worlds of both theater and feminism. Every year around Valentine's Day, activists worldwide mount V-Day benefit performances to raise money and awareness to stop violence against women. Ensler's most recent Monologues spin-off has been the "V Is for Vote" campaign, which registers single women and pressures politicians to make ending the abuse of women a central -- rather than special-interest -- issue.

Meanwhile Ensler's new one-woman play, *The Good Body*, shifts the focus north by inches, taking on post-40 belly sags, spreading hips, and other bodily "imperfections." In a series of vignettes, Ensler adopts the role of a teenager at fat camp, a bride transformed by her plastic-surgeon husband, and even former *Cosmopolitan* editor Helen Gurley Brown. The play's literal navel-gazing suggests that women's obsessive attention to their outsides diminishes their potential to create larger change in the world.

Mother Jones spoke with Ensler after *The Good Body*'s world premiere in San Francisco; it opens on Broadway in November.

**Mother Jones:** Do you think you'll ever get sick of vaginas?

**Eve Ensler:** No. You know we've had such an impact in the last seven years with V-Day. We've raised \$25 million, we're everywhere in the world, we're growing. And we've had some amazing victories.

There's a woman, Agnes Pareyio, in Kenya, who I met five or six years ago. She had been genitally mutilated as a child, and had made a decision to stop it. She had devoted her life for eight years to walking from village to village on foot, educating boys and girls and mothers and fathers about the dangers of FGM [female genital mutilation]. In her eight years, she stopped 1,500 girls from being cut. When we met her, we said, "What can we do for you?" She said, "Well, I could use a Jeep." We got her a Jeep. Forty-five hundred girls. Then we got her money, and she opened the first safe house in Africa. Two months ago, she was elected deputy mayor of Nura. And there's a good chance she'll become the mayor. That, to me, is my vision of V-Day. She said, "I am winning. I won this election because of the work I did in stopping FGM." That, to me, is the dream.

**MJ:** With things like genital mutilation going on elsewhere, do you think violence against women in the U.S. gets overlooked?

**EE:** I think violence against women in America has become ordinary -- it's been made absolutely acceptable. Battery and rape are such a part of the framework of our culture that we don't see them as outrageous. Just even trying to get candidates to talk about violence against women, it would be like getting them to talk about air. It's so basic, and how do you get people to see that it's extraordinary and unacceptable?

**MJ:** Let's talk about *The Good Body*. Many of the ideas of body image in the play—like *Cosmo* and fat camps—come from a very American place. But isn't part of your point that those have become the world's idea of bodily perfection?

**EE:** You go anywhere in the world and you see how we've exported this idea of what women are supposed to look like, and it's having a devastating impact.

I think what all of us have in common is that we've been taught and trained and programmed to focus on fixing and mutilating ourselves. That's a core reason why women do not have power in the world. It's this huge distractor. It's gotten us off the path. The only way you can undo it is by looking at the insanity of the obsession of it.

How do we, as a culture, stop buying in? I think activism is the cure -- the more you focus on people who are really in need, the harder it is to hate your body. I think it's a huge antidote.

**MJ:** Doing research for the play, did you find anyone who said, "You know what? I love my body!" and were confused about your intentions?

**EE:** I didn't find many women in this country who liked their bodies, I have to tell you. I actually found a woman who said, "I love my body." I said, "Really?" She said, "Well, I hate my face." [Laughs.] I thought that was the funniest thing I'd ever heard. She didn't even get that that was a contradiction. I'm doing this play to say, "Do the most radical thing you can possibly do -- love your body, and get on with it."

**MJ:** How did "V Is for Vote" get started?

**EE:** The idea of the "V Is for Vote" campaign was to say, "Let's take what we've built as a vision of ending violence against women and begin to translate it into having an impact on the political system." But it goes beyond this election; I hope it will get political candidates to see that violence against women is an issue that needs to be brought into focus, that violence against women is at the center of everything.

**MJ:** When you say center of everything--

**EE:** We are the majority of the population, we raise the children, we keep the culture and the communities together, our bodies give birth to the future. When you've been violated, you don't feel a future in your body, so you translate that to your children. Society just breaks down.

**MJ:** Do you worry that slogans like "Vote Your Vagina" could marginalize the cause?

**EE:** I believe in irony. And if V-Day has taught me anything, it's that if you go out with artistic, outrageous irony and humor, people are drawn to it. Look, who would have ever thought, seven years ago, that a play called *The Vagina Monologues* would be done in 76 countries, with 35 translations, in places like Karachi and New Delhi and Cairo? And if they don't have a sense of irony, I think, "Good, let people get a little shaken up by the Vagina Vote."

**MJ:** Do you ever get frustrated by people who claim we live in a postfeminist world?

**EE:** I don't even know what that means, "a postfeminist world." Did we die?

**MJ:** It's the idea that feminism happened, and that anything we ask for on top of that is just so much bellyaching.

**EE:** Well, first of all, that we're "bellyaching" implies that we're demanding something from someone -- as opposed to living in the equal world.

**MJ:** But that's the way feminism is still understood in the world.

**EE:** Well, there's a reason for that! Patriarchy has a great spin on it and keeps that spin on it in order to make feminism not as powerful and palpable as it could be. You know, those muthas, they know what they're doing! [Laughs.]

**MJ:** What would be the ideal outcomes of *The Good Body* and V-Day?

**EE:** There are two things going on. There's the violence that comes toward us, and there's violence we do to ourselves -- we're picking up the magazines, we're dieting, we're getting the lipo. Why are women immobile? Because so many feel like they're waiting for someone to say, "You're good, you're pretty, I give you permission."

The first seven years, *The Vagina Monologues* and V-Day were about stopping violence from outside, and part of that was empowering ourselves so we know we weren't deserving of that violence. This new piece is about loving our bodies. We have to give ourselves permission, and live with the determination that people may not like us for it -- but so what? We're going to move forward anyway.

**MJ:** Are you optimistic about the future?

**EE:** I think of Agnes Pareyio becoming mayor. Or I look at India, where we're opening a sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh where they can be safe from abuse. And I think, "What more would I want to be doing in this life?" And I don't get tired, because every time a woman doesn't die or doesn't get beaten or doesn't get raped or doesn't get honor-killed or doesn't get acid-burned, it's a huge victory. And you know, I find that aspect of it particularly thrilling, and I find the world horribly depressing. And so both of those live together every single minute.

### "The Whole Truth"

The Guardian (UK), October 9, 2004

Women the world over were wowed by *The Vagina Monologues*, and 'vagina lady' Eve Ensler became an unlikely star. Now she is at it again, with a new play that aims to reveal the bigger picture. But will an audience with the author (and a revelation by Jane Fonda) help a sceptical Decca Aitkenhead see the light?

Eve Ensler has been saying the word "vagina" wherever possible for the past eight years and does not appear to tire of it. The writer of *The Vagina Monologues* takes great pride in being known as "the vagina lady" and her peculiar fame has circled the globe. Ensler has become a worldwide celebrity icon for women who find hearing the word vagina spoken in public to be a profound and transformative experience.

Their response has always completely bewildered me. I read *The Vagina Monologues* and thought it sounded like post-feminist confectionery - fleetingly bonding, perhaps, but scarcely more consciousness-raising than a trip to see the Chippendales. Germaine Greer took part in a British performance of the play and found it a "much-hyped and fundamentally unchallenging piece of buffoonish American hoop-la". The scramble of actors to land the part where they got to say "cunt" on stage seemed to smack more of a celebrity bandwagon than a feminist movement, and some critics suggested Ensler was little more than a theatrical one-trick pony, exploiting the word vagina as a publicity stunt.

But Ensler has now written a new play, *The Good Body*. It is another series of monologues by women, but this time about their whole bodies. The play opens with an admission that the playwright loathes her stomach, and proceeds through a series of monologues featuring a woman with anorexia in Kenya, an Indian woman addicted to the gym, an African-American teenage girl at fat camp, a model almost entirely rebuilt by her plastic surgeon boyfriend. Its message is simple: "Love your body and stop fixing it. It was never broken."

With a sleek ebony bob, russet red lipstick and mildly unconventional outfits, Eve Ensler looks like a hippy Anna Wintour. She is physically charismatic, and has a way at 50 of seeming both maternal and girlish - a fast-talking New Yorker, yet yoga-calm. Most striking is her intense emotional engagement. She is what therapists describe as "present".

Ensler has done a good deal of therapy. Her middle-class childhood was scarred by a violent father who raped and abused her from the age of five to 10. She doesn't like to say much more about her childhood, except that her emotional survival strategy was to "fight back". By her early 20s she was "as wild as it gets" - an alcoholic drug addict living naked in communes, having "massive amounts of sex". At 24 she met her first husband and with his support sobered up.

But from her mid-20s to late-30s she suffered from profound depression as she struggled with the legacy of abuse. Her marriage eventually ended, although the couple remain close friends, and 15 years ago she met an artist and psychotherapist with whom she has been since. She attributes her salvation to love and long years of therapy, as well as many years of writing. By the early 1990s she had become a modestly recognised, though "way, way downtown", New York playwright, staging productions for audiences of no more than a few hundred.

Then, in 1994, she wrote *The Vagina Monologues*. It was an unexpected and instant hit. Women queued up afterwards to tell her stories about their vagina, often stories of rape, abuse and violence - and the play transferred to off-Broadway. Ensler used some of the proceeds to found V-Day, a worldwide movement to end violence against women, and persuaded famous actors to star in gala performances in Los Angeles and New York. By 2001, V-Day had become a global phenomenon. Through V-Day there have now been 2,300 productions of the monologues in 1,100 cities, including Islamabad and Kosovo, and they have raised more than \$25m.

Ensler's brand of feminism has evolved since *The Vagina Monologues*. She says her new philosophy is a longing for women to stop trying to transcend their body, in an assertion of intellectual equality, but to name and return to it as the source of female wisdom and power. Women have fallen for a post-feminist delusion that the greater their physical self-control, the greater their prospects of happiness, not realising that alienation from their own bodies actually destroys the possibility of empowerment.

"What a way to control us. This skinny thing is genius," Ensler exclaims. "It's genius. If you're hungry you don't have a lot of energy, and it's really hard to think. You can't do anything except think about food! What women are doing to their bodies is so utterly frightening - and, more importantly, so distracting. And if we don't get off it, it's going to be devastating."

The single greatest source of futile preoccupation and self-reproach in women's lives today - even the most apparently liberated women's lives - is the very thing that makes them female. It is taken for granted that a woman will despise at least part, if not all, of her body, and increasingly considered advisable for her to go to any lengths necessary to correct it. Self-acceptance would be tantamount to self-neglect.

This false prospectus, according to Ensler, has been responsible for the decline of feminism's international power. Women alienated from their own bodies no longer identify themselves by their universal femaleness, but isolate themselves instead into unisex categories - profession, class, nationality - in which a broader sense of sisterhood is meaningless. The feminist context of their problems has become lost.

"When I was researching *The Good Body*," Ensler explains, "I went to a vaginal laser surgery centre in Beverly Hills where women were tightening their vaginas and trimming their labia. I flew from there to Kenya, where women were having female genital mutilation. And I thought, this is bizarre. What's different about it? Somebody got it into their heads that if they got a tight

pussy they'd be more lovable. Somebody got it into their heads that if they got their clitoris cut off they'd get a husband. What's the difference? It's some system that got imposed to shut women down and cut them off. That's what people have to understand. Every culture has a mechanism for ritual operations that they utilise to impose their particular beauty tyranny and control women."

The Good Body is in many ways a globalised dramatisation of *The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf. Wolf identified a direct correlation between the increase of women's power and the shrinking of fashion's edict of the "ideal figure". Models got thinner, clothes got smaller, and women who as 1950s housewives had been allowed to be content with naturally rounded figures now discovered that to be successful professionals they had not only to be good at their jobs, but to spend a large portion of their life in the gym and of their salary on cosmetic improvements. Despite having opportunities now to change the world, when asked what single change they would like to achieve, repeated surveys of women always produce the same answer: weigh less.

But Wolf wrote *The Beauty Myth* in 1991. Susie Orbach published *Fat Is A Feminist Issue* in 1978, Andrea Dworkin was railing against diets long before that, and long-established feminists such as Greer have therefore questioned whether Enslar is offering anything new. "There are serious and important points to be made about women's attitudes to their own bodies," Greer wrote, "but feminists were making these points 30 years before Enslar clambered on the bandwagon."

Nothing annoys Enslar more than the suggestion that her work comes too late to have relevance. It provokes a rapid-fire outburst of evidence to the contrary; when the monologues first became a hit, for example, CNN famously ran a 20-minute profile of Enslar without using the word vagina. It was truly a remarkable editorial decision - but surely only an example of the peculiarly prudish nature of the US.

"Hel-lo! What about Paris? When they first staged the play, they said they couldn't put it on unless they changed the name. And Rome! They only put it on in Rome two years ago. There has been nowhere - not one country - where this word did not cause problems. So when people say they've been there and done it, I laugh. I go, really? Really? You've done it, have you? So that, for example, young girls are being brought up to know their vaginas and touch their vaginas and look at their vaginas? Nowhere is this happening in the world. Do you think there's sex education happening anywhere, where girls grow up to know what their bodies are, to look at their bodies? It's not happening. Not happening."

She is right; it clearly is not. If anything, attitudes are moving in the opposite direction. When Wolf wrote *The Beauty Myth*, plastic surgery was still relatively rare; 13 years later it is not only routine but sold to women as a trophy of empowerment: you're an independent girl now, you can afford to buy this gift to yourself. How can Enslar explain women's willingness to buy into this idea?

"The whole problem with feminism was that it was always too 'heady'." The reply is instant and emphatic. "So women were changing their ideas, but they weren't changing their being. It was all in the head. And so, for example, you could be a very strong woman and have a great independent job - but you could be with a husband who still battered you. We didn't change our bodies or our beings, so all this stuff kept happening. Now there's a chance for this next movement to change all of us, not just our heads."

How does Enslar intend to achieve this? An insight was offered by a conference she organised in New York this autumn, attended by 1,500 women. The event was co-hosted by an organisation called Omega - a vaguely new age foundation ("Dedicated to awakening the best in the human spirit") which usually holds spiritual retreats and yoga weekends. This made for an interesting aesthetic mix. Young V-Day activists wore T-shirts that read "Value your vagina. Vote!", Omega devotees wore floaty kaftans from India, and in the exhibits hall there was a touch of Camden Market meets the student union.

Enslar's collaboration with new age therapies struck me as surprising, for she describes herself as a radical feminist. A therapeutic emphasis on "inner spirit" is a very long way from the radical feminism Enslar grew up with in the 1960s and 70s, and many activists of that era would consider talk of "doing work on ourselves" fundamentally antithetical to their political project. It is men, they would argue, who need working on.

"I used to be a militant maniac," Enslar admits, smiling slowly. "I used to divide the world into good and evil, right and wrong, because it was much easier. I don't see the world like that any more. It doesn't bring about change. I've been involved in social activism my entire life and I would argue that many people involved in social activist movements have done very little work on themselves. And that has created power structures and power dynamics that are just like the ones we're trying to get away from. Look at the inability to unify on the left - the endless fragmentation. I've just seen so many dynamics repeated over and over that don't work. And I think it has to do with people ..." she pauses delicately, "not having any self-awareness."

Anyone who has been involved in leftwing activism could not fail to recognise what she is talking about. But feminism based on new age spiritualism can come dangerously close to pseudo-mysticism, hints of which were on show at the conference. From a stage adorned with candles and flowers there was talk of internal "rivers", of "waters flowing", and of other opaque symbolism. One young researcher stood up and solemnly announced: "My focus is the empowerment of women. And what I know is that women know what they know." Can Enslar truthfully say she knew what that statement meant?

"I'll tell you exactly what that means." Her answer is quick and forceful. "When you say to a woman you know what you know, there's not a woman on this planet that doesn't have an inner voice. One that she's learned to disregard because of patriarchal censorship. Like when people say to a girl, why did you get in the car with him? And she says, 'A voice inside me was telling me not to.' Only she'd learned to disregard it. That's what knowing what you know means."

Another reason why some feminists have been dubious about Ensler is her willingness to promote her work through celebrity. Among the conference speakers were a number of Hollywood stars. Didn't their presence distract from more important matters? There was a time, she agrees, when she would have said the same. "But there came a day - it was during the anti-nuke days - and there I was on a street corner, handing out flowers, as I did on a regular basis. And some guy spat on me and called me a dirty commie. And I thought to myself, this isn't working. This just isn't worth it. You are not changing anything. This is just for me. I'm just doing this for me to feel good; I'm not changing the world."

"And at the time I was so opposed to celebrity culture, and so opposed to the hierarchy of some people matter and some people don't. But there came a point where I said, OK, you can go on like this and you can stand on the street corner - and you can be right. But not have an impact. Or you can figure out another way of doing this so that people will actually show up to hear what you're saying."

"Do I think it's great that we have a celebrity system where some people matter and some people don't? No. But do I think we'll always create icons and legends? Yeah, I probably do."

Ensler's most eloquent celebrity supporter has turned out to be Jane Fonda. For women under 35, Fonda is synonymous with her workout video, which in turn is synonymous with the 1980s. The Jane Fonda workout was sold to women on a promise that it would help make them thin but, more importantly, that it would make them strong. It was self-punishment masquerading as self-empowerment.

Fonda now travels the world on behalf of V-Day, and was interviewed by Ensler on stage in New York. She addressed the audience in a voice breaking with emotion. "My father always married women with thin legs," Fonda said. "He used to send messages through his wives: tell her to wear longer skirts. By adolescence I hated my body. And you can't be in your body if you hate it, so I moved out and into my head. I'd moved out of my body to disown it because I wasn't perfect enough for patriarchy - and I didn't move back until I was 61."

"I was bulimic and anorexic for 35 years. I lived on willpower; I have tremendous willpower. I'd just will myself into exercise, and all the while I was living in my head, being perfect." Fonda said she had always loved trees. She was teaching herself to think of her legs as Arizona sycamores. "I've betrayed my legs. They've never betrayed me."

Fonda said her moment of epiphany about her body had come while she was watching a performance of *The Vagina Monologues*. "For 20 years I thought I was a feminist - and then, while I was watching, my feminism just slipped from my head into my body - I felt it - and I've never been the same again. As I've begun to heal, I could feel a need to fill my body with what I was seeking all along - which was actually my feminine soul."

Life-changing epiphanies were once the stock-in-trade of feminism. Women read *The Feminine Mystique* and suddenly saw the light - they recognised themselves in Betty Friedan's unfulfilled housewife, obsessed with the trivial tyranny of housework while the world passed them by, and they wanted a change. But the women's movement stopped producing new epiphanies, and it gradually unravelled from emotional certainty into self-doubt and dispute. Young women today could be forgiven for thinking that feminism was little more than the name given to an interminable media debate about how to get your work/life balance right.

Having grown up in this era, the last thing I expected from Ensler was a moment of epiphany. It certainly wasn't forthcoming from *The Vagina Monologues*. But as she and Fonda were talking about bodies, quite suddenly the penny dropped. I felt something happen inside - intellectual anger about beauty tyranny changed into physical rejection of it, a less sophisticated but more formidable force - and I understood the difference between them.

Feminists have for generations been urging resistance to the tyranny of beauty. But their language has been grounded in "issues", with the effect that Botox or anorexia became interchangeable with equal pay and flexible working hours. Ensler is proposing something quite different - not a version of feminism that includes, among other things, an argument against hating our bodies, but a feminism that derives entirely from trusting our bodies. "When things change in your body," Ensler says, "you say no to things. You have to."

It is hard not to feel angry that feminism still has so far to go - and this may explain why some feminists have found Ensler so irritating. The popularity of *The Vagina Monologues* can be read as a depressing revelation of how little earlier feminism works had achieved. But it is hardly Ensler's fault if women still get a thrill out of hearing the word vagina; her plays are transforming armchair post-feminists into activists, and radicalising women more effectively than a whole generation of feminist theory.

And *The Beauty Myth* is not the only book that appears to have passed many women by. There were some at the conference who could have stepped straight from the pages of *The Feminine Mystique*. One woman was 60 and said she felt rather uneasy with the "politics" she'd heard here. She had raised her sons "in a traditional way", and they were fine men. But then she added, uncertainly, "I'm coming up to retirement age. I'm going to see a fortune teller and I want to ask, will there be more for me to do? I've been in the same house for 30 years. I've just redecorated it. But I don't know. Maybe it's time to move on - I think, maybe I should get out there. But I don't know where to go." She paused. "I'm a bit afraid, to be honest. But I think I'm capable of more."

Ensler is the first feminist in a generation to have won this 60-year-old woman's interest. The capacity to inspire epiphany in others is a life-changing gift. It is remarkable to inspire it in a woman who had never given feminism a thought - but possibly even more so in a younger woman who imagined she'd heard all that feminism had to say.

· *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler is published by William Heinemann on October 21 at £10.99.

### **“Women's conference unites activists, stars”**

**The Associated Press, September 12, 2004**

NEW YORK -- A weekend conference on women and power brought Afghan and Iraqi activists together with actresses Jane Fonda and Sally Field and "Vagina Monologues" playwright Eve Ensler.

The weekend-long Women and Power Conference was sponsored by the Omega Institute, a holistic health center, and Ensler's V-Day, a global movement to end violence against women and children.

Malalai Joya was a delegate to Afghanistan's constitutional council last year who received death threats after she called warlords at the council criminals. She said Sunday that holds out little hope that Afghanistan's Oct. 9 elections will be fair.

"I hope that the people of the world and the American people will help us lead the way to a democratic society with no warlords and no cruelty against women," Joya said through an interpreter at a press briefing in a midtown Manhattan hotel.

Fonda said it's important for women "to redefine and then own our power" because "we know that when enough of us do that it's going to create a critical mass and a tipping point. And everything depends on it."

Yanar Mohammed, who heads an Iraqi feminist group, said Iraqi women were better off before the U.S.-led invasion of their country.

"Of course there was this bloody dictatorship and nobody was free in the first place, but women were able to leave their houses," she said. "They were not assaulted in the streets, you were not pushed back in your house because you were wearing modern dress."

Ensler, whose group distributes "Vagina Warrior" buttons and T-shirts, proposed a new slogan inspired by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Referring to Schwarzenegger's derisive use of the term "girlie man," Ensler said, "I am all for girlie men. I think we should get buttons that say, 'I'm a girlie man and proud.' ... Because what is a girlie man? A person who listens, a person who negotiates, a person who doesn't escalate violence."

RAWA

[www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)

Malalai Joya

<http://www.geocities.com/malalaijaya/>

Yanar Mohammed

[www.equalityiniraq.com](http://www.equalityiniraq.com)

**“Lessons for Lambs to Fight Off Wolves”**

### **The Nation (Nairobi) July 28, 2004**

The young girls are seated on the parade ground, keenly repeating what the four visitors - who had interrupted their afternoon session - are teaching.

The lesson at New Kihumbuini Primary School in Kangemi, is a girls only affair, since the subject is how to avoid being a rape victim and how to react in case you are attacked. The instructors, a group of volunteers from Dolphin Anti-Rape and Aids Control Outreach, begin with the "dos" and "don'ts".

"Msichana aliyechanuka, hampatii mwanaume hamjui mkono ya..." reads Peninah Benga from a pamphlet, stopping mid-word to allow girls to complete it for her, which they do and in unison, "yakeee!" (a street-smart girl does not shake hands with a stranger). Meanwhile, Winnie Onyango, her colleague keeps watch over the children to ensure maximum attention.

Then follows a demonstration, with a man from Dolphin representing a would-be attacker and one of the girls playing the role of the victim. Stephen Kilonzo approaches the young girl and as he talks to her, offers his hand in greeting. The girl, who seems to have forgotten what they have just been taught, offers her hand, and he quickly pulls her towards him. The audience squeals with laughter. Startled by the incident, a little girl seated near the two actors, draws a quick breath then slowly relaxes and joins the rest in laughter.

Realising her mistake, the girl in the demonstration smiles sheepishly. Not to worry she's told, because they will repeat the demonstration.

This time she refuses to take the stranger's hand. "Akinipa mkono, nini itanizuia kumfuta na kwenda naye?" (If she gives me her hand, what will stop me from grabbing her and taking off with her?) Kilonzo directs the question at the audience.

And so the lesson continues, with each theory being followed by a demonstration. The Dolphin group has designed the lessons to cover different age groups, but due to the pressure of time today, they could not divide the girls into groups.

Usually, talks for lower classes involve tips about declining lifts and sweets from strangers, who should and should not watch them dressing or undressing, why nobody should touch their bodies, and why they should go straight home from school.

"Because of their age, such tips are more relevant to the lower classes," explains the group's leader, Duncan Bomba.

When the preventive tips on the pamphlet are over, Benga and Onyango take a back seat. It is now time for reactive demonstrations. This time, Bomba plays the victim and Kilonzo the assailant.

Through their demonstrations, the girls and their attentive female teachers learn that they can use their teeth or fingers to attack an assailant.

"Use your index and middle fingers to poke your assailant's eyes like this," the two men demonstrate and then call one of the girls and ask her to do the same to Kilonzo when he grabs her from the front and pretends to drag her away.

"If someone grabs and lifts you, bite his ears and as soon as he sets you down, run," they are told. "If he has you on a bench or bed, fold your knees close to your chest and as he steps close to get on top of you, jerk your knees straight to push him away with the impact, or poke him in the eye."

There is also a demonstration for those who go home alone to show how easily a would-be rapist could grab them. "If the girl was accompanied by two or three colleagues, they would help save her, or at least alert passers-by."

Other techniques to fend off an assailant included spitting or throwing soil into an assailant's eyes, or kicking his groin or his knee cap.

Through it all the girls giggle, but they are aware of the seriousness of the matter at hand. Their teachers, sitting nearby, watch and listen keenly, sometimes trying out some of demonstrations on each another.

"Practical knowledge is one of the best life skills," Bomba says. "We want the girls to know what can happen. The demonstrations ensure that everything sinks in and remains there for a long time."

Peninah Benga and Winnie Onyango ensure that the pupils pay attention to the show.

"Not all assailants use force; some will act very nice and the girls need to know that behind these friendly gestures lie devious intentions," says Bomba.

The Dolphin quartet use day-to-day situations, for example, a man sending a girl to the shop. "If the man has ulterior motives," the girls are told, "he will try to lure you into the house, which you musn't do.

"It is all right to leave the items at the door, inform him and go."

Dolphin Anti-Rape and Aids Control Outreach, a volunteer group, started in 1998 with 25 members, who have since reduced to 10. "Since we are a volunteers, some in the group felt that they couldn't go on without pay," explains Winnie.

Nevertheless, they have reached over 200,000 students and teachers in several towns, including Nakuru, Eldoret, Nairobi, Kiambu and Kakamega. In May, this year alone, they visited 98 schools.

"We saw that rape cases were on the increase and nothing was being done about it. The law is not enough because it is applied after the damage has been done," Bomba says. "We focus on young girls and boys, who are the high risk victims. We visit schools, colleges, women's groups and churches and rely on private funding to travel to these institutions and accomplish our goal."

The programme is free. The organisers of V-Day in Kenya have been funding the group since 2002, which has enabled them to visit all these institutions, including training female staff at Safaricom's Headquarters.

And their efforts are bearing fruit: among the letters of appreciation from the beneficiaries of their talks is one from Helen, a student at Nyahururu Primary School, who describes her response when attacked by a would-be rapist: I poked his eyes and hit his kneecap very hard. He lost control of me and I ran..."

"The aim is not to teach girls to fight men, but to disable or immobilise an assailant. The skills are a last resort," Bomba says. More proof of the effectiveness of the campaign came from the Kibera slum two months ago, when a little Chelsea Feli, a pupil in class two, bit her assailant, and thus avoided being raped. The Dolphin group had visited Kibera in 2002.

### **“The Vagina Is So Yesterday -- Ensler Says Now It's All About Her Stomach”**

**San Francisco Chronicle, June 24, 2004**

Wherever Eve Ensler goes, ferment ensues. Who else could provoke bejeweled Manhattan socialites to greet each other with a rousing "C -- !" -- followed by hugs and giggles? Or inspire Cairo housewives to bake "vagina cookies"? Or cause headlines to blare: "Tokyo braces for 'Vagina Monologues.' "

Five years after she blasted the word "vagina" out of whispered usage and posted it up in big, glittering lights off-Broadway, the charismatic playwright's blitzkrieg movement to stop violence against women has gone global.

"The Vagina Monologues," Ensler's hilariously bawdy take on women's most private part, has been performed in more than 30 countries and translated into 28 languages. More than 2,300 Ensler-endorsed "V-Day" celebrations (for victory, valentine and vagina) were held all over the world on Feb. 14. In the past seven years, "V-Day" events have raised more than \$25 million to fight violence against women.

Documentaries, book projects and an army of celebrity admirers trail after her like the wake of an ocean liner bearing down on yet another port. None of it seems to slow down Ensler, 51, who has by turns aided Afghan women activists during the Taliban regime, founded safe houses for battered American Indian women in South Dakota, conducted prison workshops for female inmates and, more recently, organized anti-war protests. This once-obscure New York playwright has become an iconic feminist figure with geopolitical clout.

But last week, Ensler looked surprisingly petite, even vulnerable as she nestled deep into an imposing red couch in the baroque lobby of the Hotel Monaco, just a stone's throw from the Geary Theater, where her new play, "The Good Body," has its world premiere tonight. Not that she's missing her stage persona: the jet-black precision Louise Brooks bob, pale skin and scarlet lips. Maybe it's the pale, bare legs and red toenail polish -- she's wearing a short dress and casual black slippers -- that make her seem girlish.

"If people come to the theater and actually experience loving their body for just 10 minutes, I'll be very happy," she says of her new work. The body is an essential lens through which Ensler sees the world. But she's moved on from the vagina material to her "not-so-flat, post-40s stomach."

"I thought if I said it enough, vagina, vagina, vagina, it was like magic -- I felt good about it, and I did," she said. "That's when I began a new obsession. How many hours a day do I think about my stomach, dressing it, covering it, fantasizing about how it's supposed to look?"

Unlike "The Vagina Monologues," this play is largely autobiographical, sketching a childhood spent as an anomaly to her own mother:

"She was blonde and glowed

In her pack of golden puppies I was dark and hairy

Eew! How did this one get into my litter.

My mother would do anything, everything to clean me up,

Shut me up, make me good, make me right.

"The play looks at what it's meant for women to be 'good' and what it could mean for women to be 'great,'" she says.

And what is good?

"Thin, flat, small, blond," she said. "Blond is a piece of being good."

And great?

"An original who follows her own voice and is probably loud and ambiguous and complicated and a mystery," Ensler said. "Women have a real decision to make, whether to be good or great."

The play reveals her own past loathings about her body: "I watch ab- roller infomercials until 4 a.m. as I eat an entire bag, a family-size bag, of peanut M&Ms." Ensler, who grew up middle-class in Scarsdale, N.Y., was abused physically and sexually by her father and spent most of her young adulthood as a suicidal alcoholic.

But "The Good Body" is also full of grimly humorous characterizations of other women struggling to be good.

Like Carmen, who worships her Latin Cosmo girl mother, possessor of the highly prized "round, plumpy, high Mercedes-Benz ass." Carmen, however, is told she is "the ugly one. ... When I was a kid she would just back me into the mirror at home like a broken-down truck and she would poke at my spread like it was a jellyfish. 'Oh god, Carmen, Carmen, you've got the spread. Mira. Mira. It's bad, Carmen. You better work hard on a nice waist and a brain or no one will ever f-- you.' "

Or Bernice, who is taunted as a "chubbalah, Godzilla, fatso" girl. "Fat girls do everything double. We have to be funny. Fat girls give the best head. Fat girls always swallow." At "fat camp," Bernice sneaks out to go "chunky dunking" in the pool, where she and some other fat girls dive from the board, creating a huge wave that washes away the beach chairs. "It felt so good. We did some fat girl water ballet. It was Swan Ass Lake."

Humor has always been Ensler's linchpin in making private tortures so very public.

"If it wasn't funny, there's no way we could tolerate thinking about it," she said.

It's not a style of feminism everyone likes. The same "Vagina Monologues" that catapulted her from being a little-known playwright to becoming what some see as the Joan of Arc of a global movement for women's rights has earned her the enmity of some feminists who find her hopelessly naive and accuse her of trivializing serious issues -- navel-gazing is a common slam at Ensler -- and even of objectifying women's bodies.

Ensler is puzzled, if unperturbed, by criticism.

"I really believe when things are funny, ideas go into the bodies of human beings," she said. "One of the reasons why the women's movement has not been successful is because it has not landed in the body."

Pointing to her head, she said, "It's all up here."

That's clearly not what she feels happens onstage.

"Women don't really exist in this culture," Ensler said. "We only have sound-bite versions of ourselves. What's amazing to me is when people see the show, something gets released in them. They see their deep essential selves. That's what I think can happen here."

#### **“V-Day Manila Organizers To Produce "TVM" in Tokyo” Tokyo Business Wire, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

Tokyo Braces Itself for 'The Vagina Monologues' by Eve Ensler, the Controversial International Hit Play

This early it is creating controversy as various groups question the use of the word 'vagina' and its Japanese translation in a theatre play in Tokyo.

This early it is creating controversy as various groups question the use of the word 'vagina' and its Japanese translation in a theatre play in Tokyo.

New Voice Company (NVC) announces the Japan Premier of Eve Ensler's 'The Vagina Monologues' (TVM) in Japanese: June 23 - July 3, 2004 at Theatre V Akasaka, Tokyo, Japan. TVM Premier is directed by NVC Artistic Director Monique Wilson, Translation by Keiko Itoh. The Japan Premier will feature Japanese actresses: Koko Furuta, Kaori Okamoto and Chizuru Onoyama.

TVM is precisely what its name suggests - a series of stories, in which women talk about the most secret part of their bodies. But it's a great deal more. Using intelligence, integrity and comparison, Eve Ensler has created not just one of the best shows in the world today (it has premiered in over 40 countries and been translated in over 25 languages) but the most morally serious. In TVM, Eve has given voice to a chorus of lusty, outrageous, poignant, brave, highly original and thoroughly human stories. Based on interviews with a diverse group of women - the play brazenly explores the humor, power, pain, wisdom, outrage, mystery and excitement hidden in vaginas. TVM is

alternately hilarious and deeply moving. Covering issues from sexual abuse, first lesbian experiences, indignities of pelvic exams, women's dreams and desires, orgasms, sex, marriage, infidelity, childbirth and womanhood, the play deftly combines drama and comedy.

**“Eve Ensler to Receive Award for International Peace Efforts, Annual Award to be Given by Student Groups”  
at Cardozo Law, April 19, 2004**

The Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution (CJCR) and the International Law Students Association (ILSA) at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, will award the fifth annual International Advocate for Peace Award to Eve Ensler. The ceremony will take place in the Jacob Burns Moot Court Room on May 6, 2004, at Cardozo, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York.

"This Award recognizes and celebrates the efforts of those who dedicate their lives to achieving peace and resolving worldwide conflicts. Ms. Ensler's international campaign to eliminate widespread genocide of and violence against women through nonviolent means is a testament to the true spirit of this Award," said Seth Lieberman, CJCR Editor-in-Chief.

"In this age of escalating terror and violence, Ms. Ensler has traveled to over 40 countries, spreading the message of peace and working for the empowerment of women. Her dedication and devotion to stopping worldwide violence against women and girls is both admirable and unprecedented." said Darren Seilback, ILSA President.

The International Advocate for Peace Award was created in 1999 by CJCR and ILSA in the spirit of the law school's namesake, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo, who recognized the profound importance of freedom of expression in advocating for peace in his seminal decision in *Palko v. Connecticut*. Previous Award winners include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President William Jefferson Clinton, Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, Senator George J. Mitchell, and John Wallach for Seeds of Peace.

Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, an Obie-Award-winning play, has been translated into over 35 languages and has ran in many theaters across the world. *The Vagina Monologues* is based on Ensler's interviews with over 200 women, and celebrates women's sexuality and strength, and reveals some of the horrors that many women must endure each day. She began to use performances of the play to raise funds for organizations working to stop violence. Moreover, Ms. Ensler initiated V-Day, a global movement to stop violence against all women and girls. Today, V-Day is a movement that helps anti-violence organizations throughout the world to continue and expand their efforts, and drawing attention to stopping worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation, sexual slavery) against all women and girls. In her efforts to transform violence into healing, Ms. Ensler has "sat with women in crowded factories in Juarez, in crumbling shelters in the back streets of Cairo, in makeshift centers for teenage girls and women in Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Pine Ridge and Watts, in mansions in Hollywood, in burnt-out backyards in Kosova and Kubal, in a moving van after midnight in Paris." Ms. Ensler and the women of V-Day's efforts are far-reaching and expands across the globe.

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law is well-known for its high profile faculty as well as top ranked programs in intellectual property, alternative dispute resolution, corporate and criminal law, entertainment and communications law, legal theory, and international law. Cardozo has graduated more than 7,000 students since its founding in 1976.

## USA TODAY, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004

The Vagina Monologues made its name in 1997 as an off-Broadway play that explores female sexuality and strength through a series of stories that are at times funny, sad, graphic or horrifying.

But over the years, the production has metamorphosed into something of a phenomenon. And nowhere, perhaps, has the play been embraced — or opposed — more passionately than on college campuses.

College groups represented 66 of the 70 organizers staging productions in 1999, the first year playwright Eve Ensler made it available for benefits shows. This year, more than 650 of the estimated 1,100 groups planning productions worldwide are affiliated with a college.

"We have never tried to get anyone to do The Vagina Monologues," Ensler says. "It just took off."

Now, it's not just a play. With violence against women a key Monologues theme, groups that put on a benefit performance donate proceeds to anti-violence charities such as rape crisis centers and women's shelters. This week, during the high season of February and March, the non-profit V-Day anti-violence group that Ensler founded, is helping human rights group Amnesty International launch a campaign to end violence against women.

Students often put their own stamp on the campaign. At the University of Notre Dame this year, an open-mike session enabled students to share their stories of sexual abuse. Organizers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison invited students to send valentines to campus housing officials highlighting unsafe dorms. And students at the University of California-Berkeley used the opportunity to raise awareness of violence against its community of transgenders, people whose identity does not conform to the gender they were assigned at birth.

But with its emotionally charged subject matter and graphic language, the productions also attract controversy. The play unfolds through a series of monologues that address issues ranging from sexual assault to sexual pleasure. In one piece, a Bosnian woman recounts her rape; another catalogs the various sounds women make during sex. The word vagina is used 132 times.

"Theater seems to be a really great way to reach people," says Elizabeth Ellcessor, 22, a senior at Georgetown University, where the play ran last weekend for the sixth year in a row. "It really gets people talking."

Others say the message is potentially damaging to young women. The content "guarantees a certain level of interest among many college students," Cate Brumley, 20, a junior at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., wrote in a recent column for the Independent Women's Forum, a conservative non-profit group. But among other things, she writes, the play also "reduces the full potential of a human person" to a single body part and "encourages college women to be sexually promiscuous."

The title alone created a quandary this year for administrators at College of the Sequoias, a community college in Visalia, Calif. Worried about ruffling feathers during a bond campaign, the campus staged the play but chose not to sponsor it. An anonymous donor paid campus theater rental costs.

And in a twist this year, about 10 women, duct tape across their mouths, handed out fliers before the start of the University of Oregon production to protest what they said was an under-representation of minorities, large women and lesbians in the cast.

The most high-profile complaints, though, have come from conservative Catholics. At Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, about a half-dozen protesters, including students, parents and alumni, held a prayer vigil outside the campus production last month. The Cardinal Newman Society, a national group that calls the production an "assault on young peoples' minds and morals," ran an ad in some editions of USA TODAY recently urging readers to demand that presidents of Catholic colleges prohibit it. So far, 16 have said they would not support a production, though several cancellations were unrelated to the society's campaign. In some cases, students have moved the play off campus.

But most of the 27 Catholic schools where the play is scheduled to run this year take a position similar to Georgetown's. "It's important for students to be able to engage in dialog," says Georgetown spokeswoman Julie

Green Bataille. "It doesn't mean we specifically endorse the way in which the views are presented in this particular case but that the student has the right to do it."

Some Catholics say they support the anti-violence message — just not the messenger.

"Universities and colleges can choose much better avenues than making the point with vulgarity," says the Very Rev. David M. O'Connell, president of Catholic University, Washington, D.C. He says he would not allow the play on his campus.

But Lindsey Horvath, 21, a senior at the University of Notre Dame who has participated in her campus production for three years, says the church "calls us to act, and we found this vehicle to act and respond to these problems."

Two years ago, the group raised \$5,000 for local anti-violence charities; last year \$6,000. This year, she estimates raising even more.

"I question these people who say there are better options. What are they?" Horvath says. "I don't think I need an alternative."

**"Eve Ensler and Amnesty International March on Juarez to Stop the Murder of Young Women"  
Village Voice, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

February 14, Juarez, Mexico—"Ni Una Mas"—"not one more"—was the impassioned rallying cry this Valentine's Day as activist groups from the U.S. and Mexico converged on this gritty border city to protest the brutal killings of more than 370 women in Juarez and the nearby state capital, Chihuahua City, since 1993. Early Saturday, a rapt crowd of 500-plus men, women, and children, sharing seats and crammed against the walls, spontaneously chanted "not one more" and "you're not alone" at the local university as Mexican professor Marcela Lagarde addressed the "feminicidio" that has plagued Chihuahua State for the past decade.

Between 5,000 and 7,000 anti-violence protestors then gathered at the Lerdo Bridge separating Texas and Mexico and marched down Juarez's central Lerdo Avenue, lined with wedding-dress stores and small restaurants. Screaming "justicia," protestors carried black balloons, blurry black-and-white photocopies of missing and murdered women, and decorated dresses hanging on tall pink crosses. Even a group of fraternity brothers from University of Texas-El Paso-decked out in T-shirts reading "men of character"—marched with an enormous canvas of handprints and the declaration "These hands don't hurt."

At the front was Vagina Monologues author Eve Ensler, whose international non-profit V-Day co-sponsored the march with Amnesty International, which last year issued a detailed report damning the quality of the criminal investigations in Juarez and Chihuahua City. Accompanying Ensler was press-magnet Jane Fonda and other so-called "Very Important Vaginas": actors Sally Field and Christine Lahti, PBS president Pat Mitchell, Lifetime CEO and president Carole Black, and Congresswomen Jan Schakowsky (Illinois) and Hilda Solis (California). Solis wants to pass House Resolution 466, which supports the multilateral creation of a DNA database in Chihuahua state.

In the U.S., the right wing hopes to smear John Kerry for being within five feet of Fonda in 1970; for most in Juarez, the simple fact that Fonda, whoever she is, is a famous person agitating to draw attention to the murdered women is a hopeful sign. "I am rich, I am famous, I am white, and I have a daughter and a granddaughter," Fonda declared to a group of storming reporters. "If they were murdered or disappeared, I know the authorities would work very hard to find out who kidnapped them." Fonda concluded her comments by admonishing the press: "Why did it take international movie stars to turn up for you to be here?"

A little over ten years ago, according to an Amnesty Now article, the number of women murdered in Juarez—a city of roughly 1.3 million—averaged three a year. In 1993, the number skyrocketed to three a month. Many of these murders are classified by the police as "situational," as in domestic violence and drug- or gang-related violence, even though the similarities between the murders clearly point to a larger trend. The mutilated bodies of young, poor women are dumped in and at the outskirts of the city. The average age of the victims is 16. At least one-third of them work in the city's maquiladoras, or foreign assembly plants. More than one-third of the women are raped

before they are killed, and most of their bodies show signs of captivity and torture. Once seen as a problem in the rough, crime-ridden Juarez alone, the murders have now spread to Chihuahua City.

Rumors about the killings identify its perpetrators variously as the state police, an international organ-trafficking ring, Satanists, organized-crime factions, serial killers from the U.S., a group of local serial killers, and the Mexican government.

So who is killing the women? At an emotional press conference in the crammed lobby of the Juarez's modest Monte Carlo hotel on Friday, one mother of a murdered girl answered, "We don't know. Why do they leave them like this [mutilated]? What are they trying to erase? . . . I am sure the state police of Chihuahua know what happened to these girls. I want to know. That's a mother's right." Amnesty's report declares that "the failure of the competent authorities to take action to investigate these crimes, whether through indifference, lack of will, or inability, has been blatant." Alma Guillermoprieto, who wrote about the killings for *The New Yorker* this past fall, sees "active collusion" by the Chihuahua police as a logical possibility, and "active indifference" as the least-incriminating explanation. The police deny all involvement.

The murder of women in Chihuahua state is certainly a socio-economic political issue. After NAFTA, workers from poor villages poured into Juarez, and the rise in violence in 1993 coincides with the boom of the maquiladora economy. On Saturday, the group *La Mujer Obrera* distributed leaflets avowing that the murders "are the consequences of a global economy that continues to promote the deterioration of the social fabric on the border." Multinational corporations take advantage of loose environmental regulations and cheap Mexican labor-maquiladora workers are paid less than \$5 a day. U.S.-run factories in Juarez-including Thomson/RCA, General Electric, Ford, and Dupont-have done little to ensure the safety of their female workers: girls have disappeared in the wastelands adjacent to factories, which are often unlit. Private companies have rejected the idea that they should pay for security for their workers. Claudia Ivette Gonzalez disappeared after her assembly plant turned her away for arriving four minutes late; she was found in 2001 in a ditch with seven other young women. Her employer, the Lear Corporation, stated that the company did not need to provide its workers with extra security because her murder didn't happen on Lear property.

Saturday's protest ended with a free performance of the *Vagina Monologues* in Spanish and English, featuring the Mexican actors Lilia Aragon, Marinitia Escobedo, and Laura Flores-and Fonda, Field, and Lahti-at a packed local dance hall. Ensler made the important gesture of including monologues (in addition to standards like "Bob," about a vagina-friendly man) that spoke directly to international violence against women. There was a long, moving performance in Spanish about the rape and assassination of women in Kosovo. And Field, occasionally crying, did a piece that focused on spousal acid burning in Islamabad and female disfigurement from bombing in Iraq before she ended with the situation in Juarez. American folk singer Holly Near-leading a chant for "ni una mas"-performed a song for Juarez that also targeted violence in Chile and Guatemala.

Global in focus, V-Day and Amnesty assert that the Juarez crimes are a human-rights scandal. And so while groups like Women in White, a government-sponsored activist party-and even a selection of victim's mothers-were said to oppose the protest in part on the grounds that the vocal agitating lacked dignity, Ensler made savvy choices: pointing to the worldwide problem of gender violence, she didn't single out Juarez for blame.

The *Vagina Monologues* clearly inspired and often amused its audience. Fonda played a woman who regards her vagina distantly as a "red leather couch" or a "mink-lined muffler," and another piece ran the gamut of orgasm types: "mariachi," "diva," "triple," etc. But the divide between the monologues' occasionally playful content and the issue of unsolved murder at times felt awkward. While the crowd for the most part whooped and roared enthusiastically throughout the show, a group of three mothers whom I recognized from the previous day's press conference-sitting in the front row, placards of their daughters' faces hanging over their chests-silently stood up and walked out mid-way through.

The mothers remain optimistic, but not overly so. In October, Vicente Fox appointed a special federal commissioner, Maria Guadalupe Morfin, to monitor the state's work, and last month, he appointed a special federal prosecutor, Maria Lopez Urbina, to run her own investigations. But for these appointments to be effective, they have to be well funded, and there's no promise yet that Fox won't be as effectively neglectful of the situation in Juarez as he has been since his election. Asked at the press conference if she had hope in Lopez, one mother replied, simply,

"We hope to have hope in her." Ensler, for her part, declared Saturday V-day for "victory": the march was the largest in 10 years of anti-violence activism in the city. As one lawyer for several mothers stated, "This is the only thing that has pressured the government." Ensler vowed, "We will keep coming back to Juarez until women are free and safe."

**“Violence: A Women's Issue, Sundance film follows play's rise from theater to worldwide movement”  
Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City, Utah), January 16, 2004**

There was a time when Jane Fonda had trouble saying that "V" word.

"I was asked to perform 'The Vagina Monologues' about 3 1/2 years ago in Atlanta and I asked to have the play sent to me," she said. "I started reading it, and I thought to myself, 'Oh no, I'm sorry, I have enough problems with controversy. I don't think I need to say the V-word onstage.' So I passed."

But thanks to a persistent friend, she saw writer/activist Eve Ensler's performance of her famous one-woman show in New York. Fonda was floored by its frank stories about how women perceive their bodies, sexuality and self-esteem -- acknowledging that seeing the play had greater impact than just reading it.

"It was one of the most memorable and empowering experiences of my life," Fonda told The Salt Lake Tribune in a telephone conversation from New Mexico. "I don't think I have ever laughed so hard in the theater or cried so hard."

Needless to say, Fonda ended up appearing in the play. Like millions of other women, it touched her on "some very somatic level."

That is an example of how "The Vagina Monologues" escalated from a humble off-Broadway performance to a worldwide social movement against violence launched by Ensler. She calls her organization "V-Day."

Using "The Vagina Monologues" as a fund-raising tool, V-Day has raised more than \$20 million to help anti-violence programs worldwide. The cause has attracted other actors, including Glenn Close, Marisa Tomei, Isabella Rosselini and Oprah Winfrey.

A new documentary called "Until the Violence Stops" follows the growing movement around the globe and has its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday at 6 p.m. at the Yarrow Hotel Theater in Park City. Ensler and Fonda, who is a member of V-Day's V-Counsel, will attend. Both women and their roles in the movement are featured in the documentary, which is directed by Abby Epstein.

Ensler wrote the play "The Vagina Monologues" after conducting interviews with more than 200 women about their sexuality, their bodies and their stories of violence and sexual abuse. The play has been performed several times in Salt Lake City.

"I was talking to a friend about menopause, and we got on to the subject of our vagina, and I was sort of wondering what other women thought. So I just started talking to friends, and one thing led to another," she told The Salt Lake Tribune in a phone conversation from Manhattan.

The power of Ensler's play comes from talking about issues that for centuries have been taboo.

"It's a very moving monologue that talks about how the vagina is like a miracle," said the Oscar-winning Fonda. "It can open to receive love or to let a baby out. It can close like a wound and heal itself. It can bring life.

"If the penis could do what the vagina could do, there would be a monument to it in Washington, D.C.," she added. "But instead, vaginas are cut up and sewed and raped and denigrated and insulted, and we are made ashamed of it."

V-Day focus: Last month, Fonda spent a day in Guatemala, where she said no one has been prosecuted for the murders of more than 700 women in the past two years by "death squads." That country likely will be the focus of

V-Day in February 2005.

This February, V-Day supporters, which Ensler calls Vagina Warriors, will focus their attention on Juarez, Mexico, where the murders of more than 300 women and girls have never been investigated, Ensler said. That month, which marks the sixth anniversary of the V-Day organization, 2,500 performances of "The Vagina Monologues" will be given in 1,050 locations around the world.

"It's incredible when you think that six years ago, we were in one theater in New York City," Ensler said, "and now we're talking about 2,500 performances. You see the urgency of this issue."

Utah benefit: As part of V-Day events last February, proceeds from a local performance of "The Vagina Monologues" at the Rose Wagner Theater in Salt Lake City generated \$10,000 for the Rape Recovery Center. Additional money also went to The University of Utah's Women's Resource Center and the YWCA, which runs a shelter for abused women.

"Anything that is bringing attention to the violence against women in our community is a good thing," said Jaimee Roberts, executive director of the Rape Recovery Center in Salt Lake City.

"It takes the shroud of secrecy off of the issue of sexual assault and rape," she added. "It's always historically something we can't talk about, so women can't reach out for help as easily. What Eve . . . and others are doing is saying the shame should not be placed on the person who is hurt but should be placed on the person who does the harm."

Tale of a movement: "Until the Violence Stops," which will premiere on the Lifetime cable television network Feb. 17, chronicles the growth of the movement in 2002 through five international communities. It begins with V-Day events at Harlem's Apollo Theater, where benefit performances of the monologues were held. Also included are Ukiah, Calif., the Philippines, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and Kenya, where a V-Day Safe House for girls was opened.

"One out of every three women on the planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime -- that's a U.N. statistic. We're talking about a global epidemic that is systematically undermining women," Ensler said. "What we all need to do is stop everything we're doing right this minute and focus our attention on saving, honoring, holding women sacred if we really want the species to survive."

Fonda said that during her travels around the world for V-Day, she has been moved by hundreds of stories of women who have been victimized in some way by cultures that undercut them. But Ensler's play has sparked a new way of thinking, she said.

"You hear about these things, and you begin to love this precious part of you instead of hating it," she said.

"The hope is these women are becoming empowered by this play, and they're starting to get organized," she added. "And word is getting out."

### **“Concerns Spread Over Juarez Murders”**

**Associated Press, November 24, 2003**

SAN FRANCISCO Nov. 24 - A pink blouse, a frilly yellow child's frock and other pastel-colored clothing dangle from the ceiling. Beneath the dresses, shoes lie haphazardly among dead flower petals.

In artist Adrian Arias' homage to the women of Juarez, Mexico, the hanging clothes are a reminder of hundreds of missing or murdered girls. The scattered shoes recall those found in the desert where their raped, mutilated and beaten bodies were often abandoned.

The slayings of more than 250 women in the city just across the border from El Paso, Texas, began a decade ago. But recently, growing outrage over the killings has spread to places far from Juarez, including the San Francisco

cultural center where Arias' haunting tableau is on display through Wednesday.

"There's a lot of silence around this problem," said Arias, a 42-year-old videographer, artist and poet.

"This has been going on for the past 10 years and there hasn't been anything done to resolve the problem. As an artist, I feel I need to do something to be near the families who miss their sisters, their daughters, their friends."

In recent months, protesters have called attention to the murders by carrying signs that read "Not one more" and "Justice for our daughters" outside Mexican consulates in Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Austin, El Paso and other cities around the world.

Last month, a congressional delegation led by U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis, D-Calif., visited sites where the victims' bodies were found and spoke with their families.

And in February and March, benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" around the world will each donate up to 10 percent of proceeds to help families of Juarez victims. The shows, coordinated by nonprofit V-Day, will feature a new monologue about the killings by playwright Eve Ensler and provide information about them to audience members.

"I feel really, really compelled now to do everything I can to stop what's happening there, and to get America to stop it," Ensler said, adding that she's had trouble sleeping since returning from a recent trip to Juarez to research a magazine story.

**“V-Day Nairobi 2003 Event Saves a Shelter”**  
***The East African Standard (Nairobi), June 24, 2003***

*Home for Battered Women Re-Opened*

Nairobi (*The East African Standard*) (Women's Rights Awareness Programme (Wrap) has re-opened its One Stop Emergency Shelter for battered and violated women and children that was closed down last August. Wrap Director Ann Ngugi said the home for battered women was established in 1994 but was closed down last year due to lack of funds.

"We had inadequate funds for the One Stop's running costs like rent, electricity, telephone, water, food and security," said Ngugi.

She said since then, Wrap has been operating the main shelter at the risk of clients being pursued by their perpetrators. Ngugi said their efforts to re-open the home came after they received a donation of Sh513,146.65 from the organisers of V-Day, Nairobi 2003, through the proceeds of the benefit performance of The Vagina Monologue.  
- The East African Standard

**“Spreading the V word”**  
***The Friday Times (Pakistan), April 3, 2003***

Performances of the V-Monologues raise awareness about women's rights. Amra Ahmed attends V-Day in the capital The V-Day performance (produced by AMAL) in Islamabad to mark the international violence against women campaign 2003, AMAL, an NGO working on gender rights, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and human development, produced the play V-Monologues in Islamabad. The Vagina Monologues was first performed by the author Eve Ensler in New York over 6 years ago and has since been staged by as diverse a cast as Oscar award winning actors, students on college campuses and grassroots organisations throughout the world.

V-Day as the event was called, is part of V-World - a global movement which aims to stop violence against women and girls. In 1997 Eve Ensler met with a group of women activists and formed the idea of holding V-Days. Performances of the V-Monologues raise money and consciousness for local women's groups that are working to end all forms of violence towards women. Over these past 5 years, Ensler has contributed a sum in excess of \$14 million towards women's organisations. This year alone there have been 1,052 V-Day performances worldwide.

Pakistan is a country that badly needed a V-Day to raise awareness about violence against women. Only last week, national papers reported horrific stories of the gang rape of a 50 year old woman, sanctioned by a jirga; the rape of a 12 year old girl and the brutal disfiguring of a female Union Council Member.

V-Day is a fierce catalyst aiming to break taboos and shake societal inertia in the fight to stop worldwide violence against women, including rape, battery, incest and genital mutilation. Shocking, provocative, raw and disconcerting in turn, these true stories were read out by 8 dynamic and courageous women in the capital. Sameeta Ahmed, an artist and teacher, also had her work hanging as a backdrop to the stage. Ayesha Alam, actor, producer, director is well known for serious tele films - she has in the past dealt with the topic of rape and societal stigmatisation of minorities. Nadia Fragiaco, an Italian development consultant gave a sensitive and heart rending performance. Samina Pirzada seemed to be truly moved during her performance - never one to shy away from provocative topics, her past films have touched on subjects such as marital rape. Bilquis Tahira, a writer of short stories, was inspired to participate in the event in order to expose the issue of violence against women. Nadia Jamil was the star of the show, the youngest, and the most natural on stage. She was uninhibited with the material, evoking tears and laughter from the audience. Nighat Rizvi, the producer of the show and co founder of AMAL, is a gender trainer and activist and has worked on television and on stage. She was the moving spirit behind the V-Day production. Eve Ensler, the author of these remarkable writings, started this incredible movement rising above her own personal experiences with violence. Ensler read the end passage about birth, drawing a stunning conclusion about womanhood and the essence of life and motherhood.

V-Day events have been named as amongst the 100 best charities in the world, raising over \$7 million in 2002 alone. V-Day events have been hosted in such far flung places as the National Theatre in Guatemala, the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Folies Bergeres in Paris, the Appolo Theatre in Harlem and at the Help Institute in Selangor Malaysia. Eve Ensler says "V-World is a state of mind. It is a place you could never touch in me no matter how many times you banged my head or whipped my legs. V-World is the garden where the missing girls appear, their mothers and fathers waiting for them. V-World is the centre of us. It is the longing and it is remembering. V-World is what it smells like when they let you go, when you are not waiting to be hit, when you perspire from the sun instead of from worry."

V-Day is about telling stories about real women from all over the world. It's about us, it's about me, and maybe, it's about you.

- The Friday Times

### **"Feminist forces invade Pakistan to win the battle of Vaginabad"**

***Sunday Times (London), March 17, 2003***

PAKISTAN (SUNDAY TIMES) Amid all the shaven-headed Americans who have moved into Pakistan during the past 10 days in the search for Osama Bin Laden, another US invasion has gone almost unnoticed.

A small band of feminists led by the playwright Eve Ensler is in Islamabad to support a group of Pakistan's leading film actresses who last night defied the country's powerful mullahs to perform a play.

Ensler's play, which tells stories of women and how they relate to their bodies and sexuality, has been performed in 48 countries, but never in a society with such repressive laws against women. The women rehearsed secretly in a large house out of town. Entry to last night's show in a hotel banquet hall was by invitation only which referred simply to "The V Monologues" and a small army of bouncers was hired in case any mullahs or militant Islamic youths tried to stop the performance.

The cast read like a list of Pakistan's top actresses including Nadia Jamil, Samina Pirzada and Ayesha Alam.

Ensler encouraged them to add horrific local statistics to the script: "Talk about the 5,000 women a year burnt with acid or set fire to by their husbands or in-laws for failing to bear sons or to be sufficiently obedient."

The driving force behind last night's production was Nighat Rizvi, who, as the first woman in Pakistan to campaign publicly on Aids, is used to taking risks. "I've had my office raided, red-painted rocks thrown through my windscreen, had a fatwa put on my head, but if we don't say what we believe nothing will change."

She contacted the actresses and to her astonishment they agreed. Pirzada is used to controversy. She was barred from appearing on television for two years for appearing with her head uncovered.

The women are hoping last night's performance will be the start of a movement against the Hudood Ordinance brought in by Pakistan's military dictator, Zia ul-Haq. This contains the "zina" law under which a woman who is raped must produce at least two male witnesses. If she fails, she is convicted of adultery, for which the penalty is stoning to death.

The actresses want to translate the monologues into Urdu and take the play into villages. "Then we will take it to London and New York to show western women that, underneath all our clothes, Muslim women are just as wild as they are," said Jamil. - The Sunday Times

**“V-Day Looks Beyond The Vagina Monologues”**  
***Womens Enews, February 14, 2003***

*Today is V-Day--V as in Victory, Valentine and Vagina--the global movement that Eve Ensler launched to combat violence against women and girls.*

NEW YORK (WOMENSENEWS)--Eve Ensler has faked her last orgasm on stage for "The Vagina Monologues," which ended its off-Broadway run on Jan. 29.

The play has been a major source of funding for V-Day, the global movement to combat violence against women and girls launched by Ensler five years ago. As the movement marks its birthday today, it is turning more to personal and corporate donations to replace revenue from the play.

It also focuses on two new areas of concern for its campaign against violence--spotlight on Native American and Canadian First Women, and a new initiative to end violence against women and girls in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

"It's been three-and-a-half years, which is a very long time for a show and it's run its course," Ensler said. "For me as an artist I need to move onto the next pieces that I'm working on." These include a "teen-age monologues" based on interviews she's carried out with girls around the world about a range of issues including eating disorders, female genital mutilation, body acceptance and sex.

Next year Ensler wants to launch a one-woman production of another work called "The Good Body," based on interviews she has conducted with women in about 40 countries about their bodies.

**Theater Piece Becomes a Movement**

Ensler said she hoped both productions will generate income for V-Day.

In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised \$14 million, with half of that raised last year alone. This year, more than 1,000 V-Day benefit events are scheduled worldwide, including productions of "The Vagina Monologues" in more than 370 cities nationally and abroad to raise money for local groups.

In addition, V-Day is holding its own fund-raisers in New York City and Los Angeles and has launched its first public service advertising campaign in magazines and on television. It features celebrities and everyday women speaking to the camera about what their world would look like if there were no violence.

Last year's V-Day launched the "Afghanistan is Everywhere" initiative, which focuses on a group of women who are working to end violence and oppression in their community. V-Day also sponsored the "Spotlight on Afghan

Women" to raise funds for Afghan women working for change within their country. The title of the initiative referred to the fact that women and girls throughout the world, not just Afghanistan, are affected by violence.

This year, the spotlight is on Native American and Canadian First Nations women. The U.S. Bureau of Justice statistics indicate that the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indian women is 3.5 times higher than all other races.

Led by Native American activist Suzanne BlueStar Boy, the V-Day Indian Country Project hopes to raise awareness of the issues facing Native American and Native Alaskan women in the United States and First Nations women in Canada. It also will raise funds to provide resources for these women.

Many Native American women victims of violence are discouraged from pursuing support and justice out of fear of familial reprisal and shame and the overlapping and confusing federal, state and tribal legal jurisdictions that can hinder investigations and prosecutions, V-Day reports.

### **New International Focus**

The other V-Day spotlight this year is on Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Ensler recently returned from a visit to Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Palestine, accompanied by V-Day's special representative to the region, Hibaaq Osman.

Osman works with women's groups in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan and Palestine with a particular focus on bride burnings, female genital mutilation, honor killings, sexual assault, rape and other gender-based violence that are pervasive in much of the region.

She said one of her most shocking discoveries in Egypt was that some sons beat their mothers.

"It's a heartbreaking phenomenon. It was the first time I'd heard of this. When a father beats the mother, the son joins in. I've never heard of this in Islamic culture before," said Osman, a Muslim.

V-Day is helping the Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women--the nongovernmental organization that hosted Ensler and Osman and others from the movement--in its launching of a shelter for women victims of violence. It would be the first of its kind in an Arab country.

While in Cairo, a group of activists that Ensler was visiting persuaded her to perform "The Vagina Monologues."

One of the men at the performance, described by the Cairo Times as looking a "little shell-shocked" as he walked out, said it helped him "realize how important it is to know about these things and to respect women, their emotions and desires."

"I think we should show this in public places and it should be translated into Arabic," Ahmad Ghoneim, 23, said. "Our traditions deprive us from talking about these important issues."

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### **"Playwright Eve Ensler is on a Mission to Raise Consciousness"**

*The Jerusalem Post, December 26, 2002*

"I can't give an interview right now," Eve Ensler apologized as she collapsed in her hotel room last week. "I just had 32 orgasms in public."

Celebrated playwright, acclaimed actress, and feminist activist, Ensler had just returned from Neveh Shalom, the Jewish-Arab village near Latrun, where she performed excerpts from her award-winning play, *The Vagina Monologues*. Ensler came to the region, together with several prominent US women artists, activists, and philanthropists (including Academy-award winning actress Jane Fonda), to meet with Israeli and Palestinian women

in a visit that was sponsored by V-Day, the organization she founded based on the tremendous success of The Vagina Monologues.

Enslar, 49, is wickedly articulate, wildly funny, and deeply wise. Like many of her other plays, The Vagina Monologues is based on interviews with women who told her how they felt about the most intimate parts of their bodies. The results are irreverent, cheeky, and profound.

"Let's just start with the word, 'vagina,'" the play opens. "It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: 'Hurry, Nurse, bring me the vagina.' 'Vagina.' 'Vagina.' Doesn't matter how many times you say it, it never sounds like a word you want to say. It's a totally ridiculous, completely unsexy word. Vaginas. There's so much darkness and secrecy surrounding them - like the Bermuda Triangle. Nobody ever reports back from there."

Audiences, mostly - but not only - women, giggle, laugh, and identify with the stories and with Enslar. And they weep when the monologue, "My Vagina Was My Village," the story of a woman raped in Bosnia, is performed.

"The soldiers put a long thick rifle inside me," the passage reads. "So cold, the steel rod canceling my heart. Don't know whether they're going to fire it or shove it through my spinning brain."

FIRST PERFORMED in 1996, The Vagina Monologues has become an international phenomenon, freeing up women's repressed feelings about their sexuality, their negative body images, and their social and political inferiority. In the US, Enslar has enlisted actresses such as Glenn Close, Whoopi Goldberg, Joanne Woodward, Shirley Knight, and Susan Sarandon to perform the Monologues. Worldwide, the play has been performed in nearly two dozen languages in more than 800 cities (including both an English and Hebrew version in Israel).

For most women, the play is a consciousness-raising experience.

For Enslar, it was a catalyst to political action. She created V-Day – the V stands for Violence, Valentine, and Vagina - an organization dedicated to putting an end to violence against women. Through V-Day, millions of dollars from the hit play are transferred to countries all over the world to help women who are victims of violence. In local V-Day benefits, performers raise money for local services to women. V-Day benefits in Israel last year, produced in cooperation with Habimah and Na'amat, raised over NIS 120,000 for battered women's shelters in Tel Aviv.

In its first five years, V-Day has raised over \$14 million and over \$7m. in 2002 alone.

For the past three years, V-Day delegations, led by Enslar, have traveled to dozens of locations, including places as far apart as Kenya, Rome, the Philippines, Brussels, and Kosovo, to meet with girls at risk, victims of domestic violence and war, and to provide encouragement and support for local feminist organizations. In Afghanistan, Enslar wore a burqa (the tent-like cover that women have been forced to wear) for days, to understand women's oppression.

For some members of the delegation, the trip to Israel and Palestine was another stop on this program. But for Enslar the trip had additional meanings. In the US, Enslar is actively involved in the organized Jewish community, and has even been awarded a "Lion of Judah" in recognition of her activities and philanthropic donations. Her life-partner, Ariel Jordan, a psychotherapist and filmmaker, was born and raised here, and they have visited several times before.

The delegations take advantage of the women's prominence to bring attention to the cause, yet Enslar, Fonda, and the other V-Day women tried to avoid press and commotion while they were here and gave few interviews.

"We came to listen and learn," explained Enslar. In five hectic days, they met with women MKs and Palestinian political leaders, peace activists, and members of Hadassah. They talked to artists, authors, and playwrights, at-risk teenage girls, and to physicians and professionals who try to help victims of terror and victims of the occupation.

They visited Neveh Shalom where, under a bubble-tent, led by singer Amal Murkus, they sang "We Shall Overcome" together with the enthusiastic audience. They went to see the wall erected in the middle of the neighborhood of Abu Dis, meant to prevent terrorists from infiltrating into Jerusalem. On a rainy Friday afternoon, they stood with Women in Black to protest the occupation.

At Hadassah Hospital, they met with a young man who suffered brain damage after two suicide bombers blew themselves up in Jerusalem on December 1, 2001. Lying flat on his stomach on a hospital bed, he began speaking again only three months ago.

They crossed the Kalandia checkpoint to see a physical rehabilitation center and meet with Palestinian women in Ramallah. They talked with a woman who lost two sons, both shot by Israeli soldiers.

ENSLER LISTENS intently and actively. Her whole body is engaged. She leans forward, she smiles, she sighs, she exclaims, and she cries. She reacts, giving each woman the feeling that she has been deeply heard. By the end of the trip, she had begun to tentatively articulate her impressions. Enslar has a striking ability to empathize without siding with either side, grasping complexities without resorting to zero-sum analyses.

"Israelis have the power, and the suffering of the powerful is different than the suffering of the weak. Israelis have to accept that the occupation is wrong - and that it's not working. But that must never mean that suicide bombing is acceptable, either," she says.

Extrapolating from the success of her play, Enslar talks about vaginas, monologues, and narratives. To her, these are both concrete images and metaphors for life and change. By taking "the V-word" out of the closet, putting it in front of people, she hopes to release them to deal with other secrets - like violence and rape, fear, and death.

She hopes for creative, vagina-like atmospheres and "vagina-friendly leaders who will reflect the best in us, instead of the leaders we have, who pander to our fears."

"Women must come into power," she continues. Not women who are male-identified, but women who are female-identified, who are in touch with their vaginas." She believes that by listening to others' narratives, we can begin to understand and to stop treating each other as enemies and as "others."

"I was profoundly sad when I stood by the checkpoints," she says. "Those walls, the checkpoints and the blockades - they are all signs of failure.

"Something fundamental isn't being addressed. Everyone is afraid, and so they look for false promises of security. Those walls can't provide security, and they can't ease your fear. Only resolving the conflict can do that."

The violence, she believes, is a desperate substitute for the grief and fear that people truly feel.

"It is terrifying to grieve. People here think that if they let themselves cry, they will forever, that they will never stop crying. Instead of grief, male leaders provide violence, filled with testosterone. Testosterone does not effectively make."

SHE USES her own experiences to reach incisive political conclusions, fluidly - she might say vaginally - connecting between personal experience and political implications.

As a child, Enslar was physically, sexually, and emotionally abused by her father. Her activities today, she says, are motivated by her desire to stop being the poor little girl, victimized by her father.

"I was violated and betrayed. But there comes a moment in life when you have to make a fundamental decision if you're going to let your identity coalesce around yourself as victim, and live your life filled with bitterness, suspicion and distrust, or ask if you want to be someone else.

"You come to realize that the wrong will never be made right, what was done can never be undone. You have to decide if you can move on from there, so that something bigger can be born."

In the Middle East, she says, "everyone has been victimized. You have to move beyond that, or continue to die."

Enslar knows that she met only with representatives of the Israeli left and with Palestinian moderates, and that the

bubble tent of Neveh Shalom doesn't hold the whole reality of the conflict. Yet she trusts her ability to listen to women's stories.

"I know that there's so much more to hear. The challenge is to find the language that will allow us to listen to each other, and to give everyone here the space to finally feel and to tell their narratives."

Although she says that the details have not been worked out, V-Day is planning to become actively involved in the region. A V-Day benefit is being planned in Ramallah, and another in Israel as well. And while she would not give details, Ensler revealed that they are beginning work on a "large project that will enable women on both sides to tell their narratives."

She describes herself as both sad and hopeful for the region.

"Every woman I talked to in Israel and in Palestine wanted to figure out a way to make things work and stop the suffering. They were all like mothers, who try to support her children and her loved ones, and still support her own integrity, too."

**“When in Rome - A Report from the First V-World Summit”**  
***The Nation, December 2, 2002***

On September 29, while Tony Blair was arguing for Britain to align itself with Bush on war in Iraq, female Labour Party MPs were speaking up for vaginas. In fact, they were doing the first-ever parliamentary performance of Eve Ensler's play, *The Vagina Monologues*. Ensler, who did the unthinkable as an artist by forgoing her royalties on productions of *The Vagina Monologues*, offering it free to any campus or community as long as it does the play in its entirety and uses the performance as a fundraiser to benefit antiviolence initiatives, has made it her latest unimaginable goal to end violence by 2005.

When people say to her, "You can't," she responds, "Why?" like a powerful, precocious 4-year-old, replete with Little LuLu hairstyle and a predilection for hearts and boas. The most recent enterprise of Eve and the women of V-Day (the organizing arm and virtual-as in there's no office-foundation that came out of *The Vagina Monologues'* success) was to call a V-World Summit. On September 20-21 two dozen antiviolence activists from around the world got together in Rome--to share strategies, align their resources and eat gnocchi. The resulting meeting was, like the V-Day phenomenon itself, deeply political while still being fun and girly: Camp David meets Bridal Shower.

After a well-attended press conference presided over by the mayor of Rome, the activists--only three of whom were from the United States, while several had never before left their home country--gathered at a hilltop hotel. The group of women sat in a circle on red cushions, exchanging red or heart-shaped gifts. "Do you know how hard it is to find a red object in Bulgaria after the fall of Communism?" complained Mariana Katzarova, a journalist, as she presented hers.

After Carole Black, the CEO of Lifetime and a major supporter of V-Day, gave everyone sterling heart bracelets from Tiffany, the women went around the room and described their relationship to V-Day. Agnes Pareyio, a round-faced 46-year-old Masai woman, had a story that was typical for this group. For years, she traveled village to village in southwestern Kenya on foot, educating girls about female genital mutilation. Circumcised herself, she urged girls not to get "the cut" and discussed other ways they could mark their transition to adulthood. Her one tool in this mission was a plastic female torso with removable vulva. Pareyio would show a whole vulva, then one without a clitoris (the circumcision ritual in Kenya, recently outlawed but still widespread) and finally a vagina that had been infibulated, which is the removal of labia minora and clitoris and the stitching shut of the vulva, leaving just a tiny hole. (When a girl is married, that pea-sized aperture is expanded to accommodate sex by inserting an animal horn.)

Eve saw Agnes sitting in a field conducting a class two years ago and asked her what V-Day could do to facilitate her work. Agnes said, "If I had a jeep, I could get to many more girls." So they got her a blue jeep with V-Day printed in white on the top, a satellite phone and, this year, gave her \$65,000 for a "safehouse" for girls escaping genital mutilation. A second safehouse might open later this year.

Traditionally, women in Kenya aren't allowed to own property, so the vision of Agnes zipping around the savannah in her jeep, talking on her cell, is sort of like seeing a giraffe in the White House-or The Vagina Monologues in the halls of the British Parliament.

As each woman explained how V-Day "changed her life" (echoing the response women had to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* forty years ago), the rest of the activists wiped tears from their cheeks or threw their heads back and howled with laughter or wrinkled their brows in sympathy. Occasionally someone talked about violence in her own life of which she had never spoken, and a woman from across the circle (and literally from a different part of the world) would recognize the story as like her own, run over, squat down and hug her.

Like any important feminist meeting, though, it wasn't all catharsis and bonding. The second day was devoted to developing strategy for eliminating violence, the practical and urgent reason for the summit.

V-Day is misunderstood as merely glitzy entertainment; performances of *The Vagina Monologues* have been used to marshal millions of dollars and raise consciousness about issues that affect women. These issues are generally under the radar of US politics--such as the Taliban's treatment of women before 9/11. So when I arrived on day two I expected to see the women contemplating laws or analyzing the Constitution of South Africa. Instead, Eve asked them to imagine a "V-World" and posed these kinds of vague questions: "When there is no more violence, will it change your relationship to your identity? To sex? What frightens you about giving up violence? What makes you violent?" Visiting each breakout group, the women themselves--so fierce the day before--suddenly seemed mired in the most simplistic discussions. "In a world without violence, would we still get to have rough sex, or wouldn't we want it anymore?" went one pressing debate among European activists.

Hours later, however, when the women began revealing their V-Day plans for the next two years, an important transformation occurred.

Their ideas were visionary. Rossana Abueva and her partner Monique Wilson, who have organized the V-Days in the Philippines and all over Asia, will spearhead a star-studded event in Tokyo in 2004 to shame the Japanese government into finally apologizing to the 200,000 "comfort women" enslaved and raped by Japanese soldiers during World War II. Eve is going, of course, and they plan to fly in celebrities and as many living comfort women from around the world as they can find, making a connection between the old comfort women and the "new comfort women"--girls who are sex-trafficked. Thus far, more than fifty damage suits have been filed against Japan; most have been rejected. If the V-Day event manages to be as big and splashy as Eve hopes, they could succeed in humiliating the government. Wilson and Abueva pointed out that in Japan, being disgraced can have serious consequences. Thus, the hope is that the V-Day shaming will provide more catharsis for the comfort women than have the UN reports and failed court cases.

Meanwhile, the V-Day 2003 that they are planning in Kabul (which is again unimaginable--vaginas and burqas?) will feature Eve, Jane Fonda and any other activist who can get there. The performance will be in a theater in a once-magnificent park in Kabul that is now barren, all of its trees cut down for firewood. Eve wants to bring in women from around the world to plant red flora in the park before the show.

Shabnam Hashmi, from New Delhi, isn't doing a V-Day, but she requested that activists come to Gujarat, the site in western India of horrific ethnic cleansing of Muslims that has been largely ignored or tolerated by the media and the government. "We'll come," said Eve. "When do you need us?"

Watching her in action, it's hard not to be impressed by Eve and V-Day--yet her grandiosity irks many, feminists included. They worry that she is self-promoting, or that her "Let's end violence in eight years" plot is naïve. That's all beside the point, though. The salient question is, "Is V-Day effective in liberating women and ending violence?" The answer to that query is "yes"--and at a time when people tend to dismiss the women's movement as a thing of the 1970s, V-Day boasts 1,281 events around the world and \$14 million raised in the past few years. It grants more money to antiviolence initiatives than the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) does; this year, UNIFEM has dedicated \$1 million to be divided among twenty-two countries. (On November 25, the UN-decreed International Day to End Violence Against Women, UNIFEM is bringing together four international activists who have made concrete strides in ending violence against women--and Eve will be on hand, too.)

Meanwhile, the women in that room in Rome had a hand in saving hundreds, if not thousands, of girls from genital mutilation. A 16-year-old Guatemalan girl named Valerie Lopez helped get her sister Marsha out of an abusive relationship-and the two (with their mother) went on to produce a sellout performance of *The Vagina Monologues* in Guatemala City. Noelle Colome organized a V-Day in San Francisco that raised half a million dollars. V-Day focused on Afghanistan last year and raised \$173,000 to benefit Afghan women, in addition to the \$120,000 raised so far. And V-Day isn't simply focusing on women "out there," ignoring the problems in our own backyard. This year the spotlight is on "Indian Country" -- Native American reservations, among the poorest places in the United States. Next month, a V-Day delegation will travel to Egypt, Jordan and the Middle East to talk with female peace activists. V-Day intends to bring media attention to these inspiring but overlooked activists and convey their strategies for peace to policy-makers in the United States.

V-Day has other grand and galling plans: "We are launching the 1 Percent Campaign in February [2003]," announced Eve during the Saturday strategizing session, sitting cross-legged on her cushion. "We are calling for every country with a military budget to donate 1 percent of the budget to ending violence against women." In the United States, that would be somewhere around \$4 billion. "That's far too much to ask for," gasped an American woman who lives in Milan and provided the decadent dinners for the group each night. "Well, I started off thinking we should ask for 20 percent," said Eve, laughing.

The most profound contribution of V-Day, though, might be simply saying the word and performing the piece. It plays differently around the world, but there isn't a hunk of land anywhere where it's uncontroversial. Irene Ndaya Martine Nobote from Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, was arrested for staging a production of *The Vagina Monologues*; other women have had to face injunctions and restraining orders, the scorn of their peers and their own fears. "I wish I could say I was with V-Day from the very beginning," Jane Fonda said at the summit's press conference. The woman unafraid of going to Hanoi against her government's wishes turned down an opportunity to perform *The Vagina Monologues* because she was terrified of saying "vagina." All these fearless activists nodded their heads when Fonda admitted that "I was afraid to name my most core part." Overcoming her fear has meant huge transformations in Fonda's own life and undying loyalty to V-Day--which means not just her presence in Rome but more than \$1 million in donations.

Janet Kiarie of Nairobi, Kenya, had a different click of consciousness. She was enlisted by Agnes Pareyio to host a V-Day last year. She read the monologues aloud with her colleagues in the women's movement, but they all concluded that there would be too much backlash: "It felt just wrong talking about our vaginas," Kiarie recalled. "I resigned from helping with V-Day" and, instead, just hosted a meeting for Eve and others traveling from the United States. After the meeting, Kiarie went home and asked her 7-year-old daughter if she knew what "down there" was. Her daughter didn't know the word for vagina--not in English and not in Kikuyu, her own language. "That's when I realized I was depriving her of her own sexuality in some way," said Kiarie, "by being afraid of my own." If we needed any more evidence that the personal is political, this is it.

**“Haven for Kenyan Women Opens”**  
**Associated Press, April 9, 2002**

Narok, Kenya (AP) -- In the heart of Kenya, 16-year-old Mary Solio has found refuge from a forced marriage but not from female circumcision – two cultural traditions that some women in her tribe are working to change.

Most of the 61 Maasai girls who arrived last week at the V-Day Safe House for Girls came for a short course on the consequences of female circumcision. But 14 of them, including 16-year-old Solio, have sought refuge in the haven that was formally opened Monday by Eve Ensler, author of "*The Vagina Monologues*," the widely produced play about women and their bodies.

A year ago, Solio's parents forced her to undergo circumcision, a Maasai rite of passage. Within weeks she was married to a man more than three times her age, another common Maasai tradition. Four months later, she fled into the forest, alone and, unknown to her at the time, pregnant.

She spent the next seven months at a girls school outside this small dusty town, about 110 kilometers (68 miles) west of Nairobi, fighting off attempts by her husband and family to force her home. Two weeks ago, her baby was

born. Now she lives at the safe house, where her baby will be cared for while she attends school.

The project is the brainchild of Agnes Pareyio, a 45-year-old Maasai woman who began visiting villages throughout southwestern Kenya a decade ago to educate women about the dangers of female circumcision. As a member of a local village council, Pareyio noticed that many girls were dropping out of school in their early teens and discovered it was because of circumcision and marriage.

"When the girls get circumcised, they are considered women, they can't go to school anymore," she said. "... If they are married, they must stay home and take care of their husbands."

In Maasai circumcision, the clitoris is removed, usually without anesthesia. Some women bled to death during the procedure, and others were infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS via unclean razor blades, Pareyio said. She set out with a large plastic model of a vagina to educate older women and their daughters about the dangers of female circumcision.

Enslar met Pareyio on a trip to Kenya two years ago and said it was clear the Maasai woman's "pure will was changing this culture ... freeing women."

So Enslar began financing Pareyio's campaign, first buying her a vehicle so she could visit more villages, then providing the \$65,000 for the safe haven - two cinder block buildings with rooms for the girls, offices and a cafeteria. Another is in the works.

"We don't want to be some outsiders coming in here and telling people what to do, how to behave," said Enslar. "The only way things really change is when people from that culture work to change it."

An estimated 130 million women, most of them in Africa, have been subjected to ritual genital cutting. The number is believed to grow by up to 2 million each year. The procedure ranges from clipping or burning the clitoris to cutting off all the outer labia and sewing closed the remaining tissue, leaving only a tiny opening.

The practice is illegal in 18 countries, nine of them in Africa. It was outlawed in Kenya earlier this year but is still widespread.

Although figures are not available on the number of Kenyan Maasai women circumcised each year, Pareyio says she has seen attitudes begin to change among the cattle herders.

"Circumcision is very much part of Maasai culture, it will not change in a quick amount of time." Pareyio said. "But look here today, we have 60 girls who will not be circumcised, who will not be forced into marriage. That is a change."

#### **"Eve Enslar Uses the V Word"**

*Newsweek*, February 18, 2002

**It was one thing for a play about women's private parts to become a hit. Can 'The Vagina Monologues' sing the body electric on TV?**

Say what you will about "The Vagina Monologues," it is certainly truth in advertising. Vaginas. Monologues. No intermission. Which is why what happened one night in Boston last month was so surprising. After author Eve Enslar performed the first few monologues--the aptly named "Hair," "The Flood" and "Because He Liked to Look at It" sections--a group of forty something women near the front started whispering. "I finally stopped the show and said, 'Ladies, what's going on?' " says Enslar. "And they said, 'We thought we were going to a musical.'" The audience got hysterical. The musical women elected to stay. And Enslar continued, on to "My Angry Vagina," "The Little Coochi Snorcher That Could" and, finally, "The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy." That's the one where Enslar goes into full orgasm mode, moaning in more dialects than there are in China: the elegant moan, the Jewish moan, the Grace Slick moan, the machine-gun moan. "Well, ladies," Enslar said as she finished, "you finally got your musical."

And now for the encore. Despite what some women in Boston don't know, "The Vagina Monologues"-- a show made up entirely of women chatting about their most private part--is one of the biggest theater successes in years. Six productions of the show are now playing nationwide. It has also been performed in 31 other countries and translated into 26 languages, though it's hard to imagine how you might say "coochi snorcher" in Korean. This week "The Vagina Monologues" breaks into dangerous new territory: television. Well, maybe only semi-dangerous. It's on HBO, which is hardly a stranger to anatomically correct dialogue. Interestingly, HBO decided to do its film starring Ensler, as opposed to any of the A-list celebrities--Calista Flockhart, Marisa Tomei and Edie Falco, to name only a few--who've performed in the show over the years. "I really wanted it to be more grass-roots and reflect the women I had interviewed," says Ensler, who also talks with some of those women in the TV version. "I think it was very brave of HBO to do it. It's a political piece. There's nothing scarier at this point in our culture than political work."

All of which raises a question: how did the word "vagina" end up in NEWSWEEK? In other words, how did a piece of performance art about women's unmentionables go mainstream? A big part of the reason is the taboo factor itself. "No one had ever talked about this before," says Ensler, who was a little-known "downtown" writer before she created the monologues in 1996. "When women realized they had permission to scream about having a clitoris, they went crazy." Certainly the celebrities helped, too. "Eve said, 'Will you do this?' And I said, 'Oh, my God. You mean say those things in public?' " says Tomei, one of the first to sign on. "But saying those words night after night, it works magic on you. It gets inside your skin." Contrary to what you might think about hearing "vagina" 128 times in one evening--and that doesn't include its unprintable synonyms--"The Vagina Monologues" isn't at all heavy. In fact, as you listen to the story of a tax lawyer turned dominatrix or an old woman who hasn't thought about "down there" since a teenage boyfriend humiliated her, the sexual nature of the show somehow becomes universal. And it's a riot. "What Eve brought back to feminism was she made it fun," says producer David Stone. "It almost sounds frivolous, but feminism became a burden, something that had to be talked about in a strident and passionate way. This is not only funny, it's fun. That's liberating."

Perhaps the group that's been most liberated by "The Vagina Monologues" has been younger women. Students at 550 colleges will soon perform the show for **V-Day**, a nonprofit organization that produces benefits which, combined with money generated by the show's productions, are expected to raise \$6 million this year for women's organizations. "**V-Day** is an institution on colleges campuses," says Ensler. "They literally have vagina meetings. Wesleyan has a c--t club." A good deal of the credit for that goes to Ensler, a straight-talking New Yorker in an Anna Wintour bob. It's no accident that she performs every show wearing a sexy black dress and no shoes. "She's up there in bare feet, and she's so exposed. She looks so beautiful," says Willa Shalit, executive director of **V-Day**. "Young girls look at her and say, 'That's kind of cool. I wouldn't mind being like that!'"

That's not to say "The Vagina Monologues" doesn't make some people nervous. Last year the Albany, N.Y., Times Union, a Hearst paper, refused to run a "Vagina" ad, even though Patricia Hearst herself was doing the show in New Haven. And when Donna Hanover, Rudy Giuliani's estranged wife, performed in New York in 2000, she touched off a minor political earthquake. "I don't think it ever stops being controversial," says Ensler. "We're not in a world yet where people are like, 'vagina, vagina, vagina!'" Still, the show has broken through in a remarkable number of places. Designer Liz Claiborne has created a "V" necklace, with proceeds benefiting the **V-Day** charities. There was even an episode of CBS's "Everybody Loves Raymond" where Ray's mother makes a vagina-like sculpture in art class. "When I first did the show, CNN did a 10-minute piece and never mentioned the name," says Ensler. "Then they did it again recently and couldn't stop saying it."

Now that she's made the world safe for genitalia, Ensler is moving on. After a few performances in San Francisco, she won't appear in "The Vagina Monologues" anymore. "The play is behind me now in what I want to say," she says. "It feels like I'm retelling something, as opposed to saying something new." Ensler's next piece, "Necessary Targets," opens in New York this week. It's about a writer (not unlike Ensler) and a therapist who counsel women in Bosnia on overcoming the war. Despite her "Vagina" fame, it took Ensler years to get the play staged. "I said to a producer once, 'Tell me, what's wrong with the play?' And he said, 'Two words: Bosnian refugees'," she says. After that comes an even more political piece. It's called "The Good Body," a sort of companion to "The Vagina Monologues" for which Ensler talked to women around the world. "I'm looking at how women fix their bodies, whether it's liposuction or scrubbing, genital mutilation, nose jobs or vulva surgery in Beverly Hills," she says. Vulva surgery? "It's the funniest monologue I've ever written," Ensler says. Let's see someone do a sitcom about that.

**“800 Events Promote V-Day from Antarctica to Zaire”**  
***Women’s Enews, February 14, 2002***

Agnes Pareyio has been traveling around Kenya for years with a vagina in her hand.

The vagina in question, made of wood, can be separated into its component parts, and Pareyio uses it to demonstrate the effects of female genital Mutilation, commonly known as "female circumcision." Until recently, she traveled from village to village on foot, and it took her a year just to traverse the territory west of the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. This year, for the first time, Pareyio has a sport-utility vehicle, allowing her to cover in three months what once took her a year. She's also opening a safe house to shelter the girls fleeing families who insist they go through with the perilous ritual.

Meanwhile, in China and Malaysia, a pair of brave young women await word from government censors about March performances of "The Vagina Monologues," a series of sketches that, with their frank portrayals of women's feelings about their vaginas, has become a key source of funding for violence-prevention programs around the world. If approved, the Beijing performance would benefit the country's Domestic Violence Network and Red Maple Counseling Center, both new organizations in a country where abuse of women is rarely confronted or discussed.

And in the far Northern California town of Ukiah, a rural community known best for its confrontations between logging communities and environmentalists, residents are consumed by "vagina fever," an exhibition of vagina-themed quilts overtaking the town square and a local domestic violence network set to benefit from it all.

Welcome to V-Day 2002

Tonight, the HBO premiere of "The Vagina Monologues" continues a month of performances around the world organized by V-Day, an organization born of the enormous response to the play of the same name, originally written and performed by Eve Ensler. Last year, most of V-Day's attention focused on a star-studded extravaganza at Madison Square Garden in New York; this year, 800 events from Zaire to Antarctica will run from Jan. 23 to March 8. On that last day, International Women's Day, "Monologues" playwright Ensler will arrive in Kabul, Afghanistan--not undercover as she did in 1999, when she was researching the plight of Afghan women but as a public figure presenting a satellite-phone system to the new Afghan Ministry for Women's Affairs.

In this way, V-Day's fusion of art and politics performs an end run around squabbling legislators and United Nations consensus processes by directing energy, attention and resources to strategies for women's survival. Last year, the network of V-Day performances raised about \$350,000, according to Cecile Lipworth, managing director of V-Day's worldwide campaign; this year, with 91,000 theater seats, V-Day is set to pull in \$2 million. All that in addition to corporate sponsors such as Lifetime Television, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, and Tampax, funding the organizing work that in turn has energized 800 communities to pick up the ball to raise funds for local groups fighting violence.

It All Began in Bosnia

V-Day grew out of Ensler's passionate response to the revelations about Bosnian "rape camps," in which women were held and systematically raped by Serbian soldiers in the early 1990s. Rada Boric, director of the Center for Women War Victims in Zagreb, Croatia, and now "almost a sister" to Ensler, remembers that the playwright, on assignment in a refugee camp for The New York Times, ended up staying for weeks, "making coffee and crying." The result was the play "Necessary Targets," which was staged in 1995 as a benefit performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright "sobbing in the front aisle," says Boric. At that moment, the show's producer, Willa Shalit, realized that Ensler was the partner she had been looking for to link art and social change. "Monologues," which Ensler wrote next, featured "My Vagina was a Forest," from the heartbreaking testimony of one of Boric's clients.

Everywhere Ensler performed "Monologues," women approached her with their own stories of abuse. Finally, in 1997, she declared that she would have to stop performing it "if we didn't do something to end violence against women and girls, like I knew too much and couldn't keep going. And that's why we started V-Day."

## Colleges, Communities Powering Local Efforts and Winning Prizes

During the first year of V-Day events in 1998, 65 colleges in the United States and Canada staged "Monologues"; this year, 543 colleges and universities around the world will mount productions of the play, raising funds to support existing programs, like women's centers and shelters, and for new, creative initiatives, such as the \$500 Howard University raised to buy new underwear for women seeking help at its rape crisis center.

On the international level, many organizers are contending with a host of concerns in addition to the near-universal reality of rape and battering. In Manila, the Philippines, where powerhouse organizer and actor Monique Wilson obtained government permission by doing a performance of "Monologues" for the officials in charge, the proceeds from the 8,000-seat performance will go primarily to efforts to combat sex trafficking; an estimated 700,000 women are trafficked via the Philippines annually, according to Worldwide Campaign managing director Lipworth. In South Africa, government resistance was trumped by the first well-publicized incident of "baby rape" in 2001, in which HIV-positive men raped girls younger than 10 on the assumption that the girls were free of the virus and would therefore cure them. "The whole country woke up," says Lipworth, herself a South African national. "They said 'Oh my God, we have to do something.'"

All participants in V-Day must agree to either start or fund local efforts. If they're looking for a new project to fund, they needn't look much further than V-Day's "Stop Rape" contest, now in its second year. Last year, winners included a Brazilian street-theatre troupe focusing on domestic violence and a German group's proposal for baked goods with anti-rape slogans.

"What's kind of heartening is how many of the ideas overlap," says Karen Obel, director of the College Campaign, which held its own, separate contest this year. Among the winners in this year's contest are the Pink Coats, a highly visible, all-women bodyguard service to accompany women crossing Western Washington University's campus. The winners of the international contest will be announced on Saturday at V-Day's gala fund-raising performance in New York, which will feature a star-studded cast that includes the actors Jane Fonda and Rosie Perez.

"War, War, War: Where are the Women?"

On her way to Afghanistan, Ensler will stop in New York for the re-opening of "Necessary Targets." Last December, reflecting Ensler's longtime commitment to the plight of women under the Taliban and beyond, a run of "Targets" at the Hartford Stage in Connecticut hosted a group of Afghan women who had just met one another in Brussels, a meeting coordinated by V-Day with Equality Now, an international organization advocating for women's rights.

Long before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, Ensler was reporting in Afghanistan under cover of a burqa, returning "with articles no one would publish. Nobody cared." One monologue, "Under the Burqa," was performed by Oprah Winfrey at last year's event, highlighting the brutalization and starvation of women conducted as a matter of Taliban policy. Then the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center focused attention on Afghanistan for the first time in years.

The terrorism on Sept. 11, Ensler and Shalit say, was a window exposing the dangers of violent oppression of women. "We're in a very dangerous shape as a human species," Ensler says. On Sept. 11, she says, "the window opened for a moment and we all saw it together." In that moment, Ensler and Shalit say, the White House and Congress were talking about--and listening to--Afghan women. Now, the infrastructure Ensler is helping build can assist women in keeping and gaining the public's attention.

For example, Ensler's upcoming trip to Afghanistan will provide some of the infrastructure for Dr. Sima Samar, Deputy Prime Minister and head of the newly created Ministry for Women's Affairs, that international aid hasn't provided. "We're bringing in four satellite phones. With cellular re-chargers, because electricity is so unreliable there," Shalit says.

At the end of V-Day celebrations, the phones will be there. So will the Kenyan safe-house for women fleeing genital mutilation; safe-houses for trafficked women in Sri Lanka and Zagreb; and the first-ever battered-women's shelter

on Lakota land near Rapid City, S.D., where U.S. law enforcement cannot provide protection to survivors of domestic violence. All this in addition to a million conversations, a thousand vagina quilts, hundreds of rape crisis centers that can continue operating with the funds raised by V-Day.

Meanwhile, Shalit and Ensler are looking toward the next revolution to start with the revival of "Necessary Targets," which Shalit hopes will have an impact on the current war fever in the United States.

"Everyone's talking war, war, war," she says, "but where are the women?"

Chris Lombardi is a freelance writer in New York. She coordinated Women's Enews' Fall 2000 election coverage and helped cover the Beijing + 5 conference on women. Her work has been published in Ms. Magazine, the Progressive and Inside MS.

**“V-Day Fights Rape, Battery”**  
***San Francisco Examiner, November 16, 2001***

Award-winning playwright Eve Ensler has used her play, "The Vagina Monologues," to raise millions of dollars for non-profit groups aiming to end violence against women and girls around the world.

Her group V-Day -- a charity that fights rape, battery, incest, female-genital mutilation and slavery -- receives money through benefit performances.

Ensler this week announced V-Day San Francisco 2002's benefit show: On Feb. 12, Ensler, Calista Flockhart, Rosie Perez and other stars will perform the Monologues in the Masonic Auditorium. Proceeds will go directly to local women's groups.

**Adrienne Sanders: Why is your show so popular?**

**Eve Ensler:** Any time you really bust open a taboo, people get excited.

**Q. What surprised you about it?**

**A.** It was really surprising after so many years of feminism how few women loved their vaginas. It's taken so many years for people to calm down and say the word. I mean, anthrax is on a full page in any given paper and that's less scary than vagina?

Equally surprising was to see how excited women got once they began thinking about them.

**Q. What do audiences tell you about the show?**

**A.** I'm always surprised when women tell me they've never had an orgasm and they're never going to fake it again. I've had men come up to me and tell me they wish they had a vagina.

**Q. Tell me about V-Day 2002 and the Monologues.**

**A.** The whole thing is going local. We're bringing V-Day into small communities everywhere. It's as varied as Manila and Romania to Milwaukee.... One of the things we're trying to create is self-empowerment so people use the Vagina Monologues to serve their own ends.

**Q. What's happening in San Francisco?**

**A.** San Francisco is definitely going to be one of the bigger events. I'll be performing there and we'll have a lot of wonderful actors at the event. San Francisco was so incredibly supportive of the Vagina Monologues... In the HBO special, I tell which cities are vagina-friendly zones, vagina-holiday zones. San Francisco is a vagina world fair zone.

**Q. What in your background contributed to your current work?**

**A.** I've always been feminist and I suffered violence early on. I know how much work I've had to do to overcome it and I don't want other women to have to do the same.

**Q. How did the connection of V-Day with the show come about?**

**A.** I went around the world to communities and met V warriors who were really brave to bring the show there. It was so grass roots then, people would just line up after the show to tell me how they'd been beaten or raped. And I just started to feel insane. And I said, "Either I'm going to stop doing the show or we're going to figure out a way to end violence against women."

And the first year we invited all these great actors like Glenn Close, Susan Sarandon and Whoopie Goldberg and they agreed to come perform to raise consciousness for V-Day. We raised a few hundred thousand dollars and that kind of launched V-Day.

**Q. How do you find the groups?**

**A.** They find us. V-Day is really about attraction and not promotion. Suddenly, we'll get a call from China. This year it will be performed for 8,000 people in the Philippines.

**Q. How are funds distributed internationally?**

**A.** I go around the world and see the work they do. Right now, activists in Kosovo took a Monologue piece and they turned it into a rock song in Albanian. It's really popular.

We're opening a safe house in the Masai Valley in Kenya where girls can run to save their clitoris. We're in the process of opening a safe house on Sioux land in South Dakota.

**Q. What has been the most difficult part of your work?**

**A.** Emotionally exposing oneself to all the terrible things that are going on to women around the world. And the struggle to convince people that violence against women matters. I encounter resistance everywhere.

Every year at V-Days I ask the women in the audience to stand up if they've ever been raped or beaten. At Madison Square Garden last year, about 9,000 women stood... Seeing the internalized shame after you've been brutalized is the most disturbing thing.

**Q. What are your thoughts on the terrorist bombings?**

**A.** Women are scary because we're so powerful. We know so much that we don't utilize. We feel so much that we discount. We have solutions to a lot of things we don't trust.

I do not think most women would have sent bombs in response to the terrorist bombings.

I think we're more complex than that. We would have seen a solution in a much more complex way.

**Q. What would you have liked to have seen instead?**

**A.** Well I think something is being revealed to us right now on the planet. There is a serious situation and I think it's opened a huge door. Do we want to keep inventing enemies and see ourselves as threatened by the world?

One is a very male way of seeing the world. The other is very female. I would like us to look at the big questions: poverty, how women are being treated around the world, what's going on with Israel. And I don't see OBL has been caught -- it reminds me so much of Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

**Q. What's up next for you?**

**A.** I'm working on a play called "The Good Body" which is a piece about how they shape, fix, mutilate, hide their bodies in order to fit in with their particular culture. And then I'm doing a series of monologues based on interviews with teenage girls.

The Vagina Monologues is coming to HBO on Valentine's Day, which is so exciting.

SELECTED PRESS RELEASES  
(additional press releases are available at [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org))



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**V-Day Announces Its 10th Anniversary**

**V TO THE TENTH TO TAKE PLACE AT THE  
NEW ORLEANS ARENA AND LOUISIANA SUPERDOME  
FRIDAY - SATURDAY, APRIL 11-12, 2008**

**\*\*\*FEATURING SALMA HAYEK, OPRAH WINFREY, JANE FONDA, JENNIFER HUDSON, GLENN  
CLOSE, JULIA STILES, ASHLEY JUDD, MARISA TOMEL, CALPERNIA ADDAMS, ROSARIO  
DAWSON, KERRY WASHINGTON, ELLEN DEGENERES, AND MUSICIANS JOSS STONE,  
COMMON, EVE, CHARMAINE NEVILLE\*\*\***

**V-Day's 2008 Season To Include Thousands Of Local V-Day Benefits Worldwide,  
The Tenth Anniversary Edition of The Vagina Monologues,  
North American Speaking Tour With Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler,  
Spotlight On Women In The Gulf South, and more**

**Support From The NoVo and Rockefeller Foundations**

**Pro Bono Creative Branding Campaign From Award Winning  
TBWA/CHIAT/DAY Los Angeles**

November 19, 2007 - V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2008 with women and men from the U.S. and throughout the world.

Founded by playwright Eve Ensler on February 14, 1998 at the first benefit of her award winning play The Vagina Monologues, the global non profit has raised over \$50 million for local anti violence groups with events taking place in over 120 countries to date and thousands more planned during the upcoming anniversary year.

To celebrate the last ten years of ending violence against women and girls and welcome the next ten years, thousands of V-Day activists will stage their annual benefits beginning in January. V-Day's 2008 season will culminate with V-Day's mega two-day anniversary celebration in New Orleans Friday - Saturday, April 11-12 at the New Orleans Arena and Louisiana Superdome - V TO THE TENTH. V-Day's anniversary events are made possible by the generous support of the NoVo Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. TBWA/Chiat/Day Los Angeles is creating a branding and messaging campaign pro bono for the anniversary.

Each year V-Day increases awareness by focusing on a specific group of women in the world who are resisting violence with courage and vision. In 2008, the spotlight is turned to New Orleans and the Gulf South. The spotlight will highlight the daily ongoing work of women in their communities who have steadfastly kept New Orleans and the Gulf South alive with little to no resources. These women - "Katrina Warriors" - will be honored for their strength and resilience in the face of devastating loss. The spotlight will bring global attention and funds so that women may be safe and empowered in a region whose pulse beats like no other.

“V to the Tenth will celebrate our victories and usher in the next ten years where together we will raise the stakes, go further, go deeper, increase the power and CHANGE THE STORY OF WOMEN. What happened in New Orleans and the Gulf South after the flood and storm represents the challenges that women face worldwide- violence, global warming, racism, lack of healthcare and education, financial insecurity, and the failure of local and national governments. All these are pieces of the story of violence that continues to impact women in the United States and around the world. V to the Tenth is a celebration, it is the call, the decision, the next step,” stated V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler.

Two invitation only fundraisers are in the works - on the West Coast in January and a special NYC celebration on Valentine’s Day, February 14. Throughout February and March, thousands of V-Day benefits are scheduled throughout the U.S. and the world from Shenzhen, China to Stockholm, Sweden from Canberra, Australia to Lagos, Nigeria. To coincide with these events, Ensler will embark on a nationwide 20-city V To The Tenth speaking tour. In February, Random House will release the 10th anniversary edition of The Vagina Monologues and the paperback edition of Ensler’s most recent book, Insecure At Last.

These events will lead up to V TO THE TENTH, the V-Day event of the decade, on April 11 - 12, 2008 at the New Orleans Arena and Louisiana Superdome. On Saturday evening, April 12, V-Day will stage a once in a lifetime event featuring international performances of The Vagina Monologues, musical guests, V-Day activists from across the globe including Kenya, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Democratic Republic of Congo and Eastern Europe, men standing up for women and much more. Calpernia Addams, Glenn Close, Rosario Dawson, Ellen DeGeneres, Jane Fonda, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Hudson, Ashley Judd, Julia Stiles, Marisa Tomei, Kerry Washington, Oprah Winfrey, and musicians Peter Buffett, Toni Childs, Common, Eve, Charmaine Neville, and Joss Stone have already signed on.\* The evening will open minds and hearts and raise much needed attention and funds for groups working to end violence against women and girls around the world, and in New Orleans and the Gulf South.

Tickets from \$25-\$1000 are on sale now. Visit <http://www.ticketmaster.com/event/1B003F5EC8C97006?artistid=1172255&majorcatid=10001&minorcatid=1> Over the weekend, Friday - Saturday, April 11 -12, the Superdome will be transformed into SUPERLOVE. Activities will strengthen the V-Day model of empowerment by linking art and activism; building bridges across class, nationality and racial divides; and providing a center of caring, learning and healing for the local community. During the two days V-Day will reclaim the dome, transforming it into a place of empowerment and action.

Special wellness programs are being planned for the women of the Gulf South free of charge throughout the two days. The space will feature events and programming – open to all - with international and local speakers (Carole Bebelles Rosario Dawson, Jane Fonda, Dr. Denis Mukwege, Suze Orman, NYC Council Speaker Chris Quinn, Rha Goddess, Kerry Washington and more), spoken word and performances, art installations, and more. V-Day activists from around the world can meet at the Superdome to network and connect with each other, and the women of the Gulf South.

V-Day will announce the SUPERLOVE schedule in the coming weeks with tickets available online. Sign up for V-Mail to receive information and program schedules for the Superdome, as well as the latest updates on V TO THE TENTH.

Over its ten years of art and activism, the V-Day movement has educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns, launched the Karama program in the Middle East, reopened shelters, and funded over 5000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Kenya, South Dakota, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt and Iraq.

For the latest updates on V To The Tenth, sign up for V-Mail. Visit [www.vday.org/vmail](http://www.vday.org/vmail).

To download the event poster with the first TBWA/Chiat/Day design, visit [www.vday.org/contents/v10/getinvolved](http://www.vday.org/contents/v10/getinvolved).

#### About V-Day

V-Day is a global movement to end violence against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of Playwright/Founder Eve Ensler’s award winning play The Vagina Monologues. In 2007, more than 3000 V-Day events took place in the U.S. and around the world. To date, the V-Day movement has raised

over \$50 million and educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns, launched the Karama program in the Middle East, reopened shelters, and funded over 5000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Kenya, South Dakota, Egypt and Iraq. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. <http://www.vday.org>

\* Pending scheduling



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**V-Day Announces Its 2007 Season: Reclaiming Peace  
WOMEN IN CONFLICT ZONES HIGHLIGHTED AT THREE THOUSAND BENEFITS ON COLLEGE  
CAMPUSES AND COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE**

**FUNDS RAISED LOCALLY BENEFIT LOCAL WOMEN'S  
PROGRAMS, SHELTERS AND CRISIS CENTERS**

**SPECIAL EVENTS HELD IN DUBAI, SOUTH AFRICA, AND HAITI**

**E-Cards In Time For Valentine's Day**

Since 1998, the V-Day movement has worked to stop violence against women and girls worldwide. V-Day's model of 'empowerment philanthropy' has been a catalyst for activists, college students and anti-violence organizations to transform their communities in more than 112 countries to date. Between February 1 and March 8 (International Women's Day) 2007, over 3000 V-Day benefits will take place in over 1120 communities and on college campuses. From Nigeria to NYU, China to DePaul University, from New Zealand to University of Puerto Rico, local activists will stage benefit productions of "The Vagina Monologues" raising funds and awareness for local anti-violence groups, rape crisis centers, and women's shelters in their communities.

V-Day's 2007 theme Reclaiming Peace makes the connection between the worldwide anti-violence work of V-Day activists with our collective desire for peace and an end to armed conflicts. "We are saying that if a government supports the use of force, weapons, violence as a method of control and dominance, this models and gives license to the same kind of behavior at home," stated V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler.

V-Day 2007 events will put forth this message of peace generating attention, newspaper articles, and raising funds to support their anti-violence work and dedication to peaceful means. For the first time, V-Day will offer a special version of its logo, playing off this theme. The theme will resonate in the United States and around the world and will expand on V-Day's successful 2006 season, during which over 2700 V-Day benefit events were presented by national and international volunteer activists, educating millions of people about the issue of violence against women and girls, raising nearly \$4 million and benefiting over 1100 anti-violence groups.

Each year V-Day spotlights a particular group of women who are experiencing violence, with the goal of raising awareness to put a worldwide media spotlight on this area and to generate funds to aide groups who are addressing it. In 2007 the V-Day Spotlight will be on Women in Conflict Zones because war exponentially increases the crimes of violence against women and girls. In equal measure the strength and resilience of women in rebuilding their communities and leading governments to peaceful solutions needs to be celebrated. For women, not just during war but for decades to come, armed conflict means escalated military, sexual, and domestic violence, lack of security as a displaced person or refugee, and vulnerability to sex traffickers and coerced prostitution even by the peacekeepers themselves. Given the 21st century's escalating armed conflicts, impunity for wartime sexual violence cannot be tolerated. As patterns of wartime rape and sexual violence continue today in places such as Sudan, Congo, and Iraq, it is paramount to expose and condemn these crimes through international media coverage and public outcry and efforts in the communities themselves.

In January 2007, V-Day's Karama Program completed a two-day national workshop in Morocco, with events in Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt planned for February and March. Through V-Day Karama, local leaders bring activists and experts together to address violence as both a cause and an effect of the challenges facing the country's politics, economics, health, art/culture, education, media, laws, and religious debates. V-Day Karama is taking a small delegation of women activists to the United Nations at the end of February 2007 to participate in the annual session of Commission on the Status of Women, where our delegation will organize the first NGO Caucus for the Middle East and North Africa among the international advocates.

In March 2007, the 1st Beirut International Women's Forum will convene women leaders, politicians, executives, journalists, and activists from across the Middle East region. Convened in Dubai by the Arab League, the UN, V-Day and Al Hasnaa magazine, the Forum will capture the transformation taking place in the world of Arab women, identify emerging trends for women in civil society, business, and politics, while providing a platform to debate major aspects of the lives of Arab women such as working motherhood and women's bodies as power.

In May 2007, the 1st workshop for V-Day activists in Africa will take place bringing together women and men from 23 countries to develop a V-Day Africa Coalition. Across Africa, local V-Day activists have been developing tools, power and resources for African women to control their bodily security in sexual relationships, zones of armed conflict, and against abuse. At the workshop, women leaders and activists in Africa will join together to look at the intersection of HIV/AIDS and violence against women, developing strategies and actions to combat these issues.

In April 2007, V-Day will travel to Haiti for the 1st time. With benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" in Port Au Prince and satellite performances by local women in rural and outlying communities, V-Day will inform and educate the world about the horrific rapes and abuses that have been taking place for decades.

In the summer of 2007, V-Day's Until The Violence Stops Festival, successfully originated in New York City in 2006, will be replicated by V-Day organizers in Ohio and Kentucky, bringing together women's groups in those states to stand strong and demand an end to violence in their communities.

And in February, V-Day supporters can send specially designed Valentine's e-cards in honor of loved ones, friends and families.

Empowering women the world over has been V-Day's greatest joy. There is nothing more rewarding than hearing from organizers, beneficiaries, and audiences that the work being done in their communities is creating safety, healing and inspiration for all women, men and children.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan/Kate Fisher/V-Day  
(212) 253-1823, [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**NYC MAYOR BLOOMBERG JOINS WITH V-DAY TO LAUNCH UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS:NYC  
AT CITY HALL PRESS CONFERENCE**

**V-DAY ANNOUNCES CITYWIDE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN THAT URGES NEW  
YORKERS TO 'MAKE NYC THE SAFEST PLACE ON EARTH FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS'**

**MESSAGING AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN WILL PROMOTE  
UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC, A TWO-WEEK FESTIVAL BRINGING THE ISSUE OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CENTER STAGE JUNE 12-27**

*Tickets From \$10, On Sale NOW*

New York, NY - May 18, 2006 (Updated May 26, 2006) - Today, NYC Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg joined with V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler to launch UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC and the messaging/advertising campaign in the Blue Room at NYC's City Hall.

"Eve Ensler's festival, *Until the Violence Stops: NYC*, takes the issue of violence against women out of the silence of the home and into the community, demanding all New Yorkers work to end violence against women," stated Mayor Bloomberg. To view the press conference, visit: <http://www.nyc.gov>

From May 22 - late June, a citywide outdoor advertising campaign that will take over New York City's buses, subway cars, subway platforms and street banners urging New Yorkers to "Make NYC The Safest Place On Earth For Women And Girls." The campaign will appear throughout the five boroughs stopping all New Yorkers in their tracks and inviting them to join V-Day in the effort to end violence against women and girls.

The campaign will promote V-Day's two-week festival that will bring together artists, community groups and city leaders for the very first festival of its kind: UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC. Taking place June 12 - 27, UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC is a festival of theater, spoken word, performance and community events created to bring the issue of violence against women and girls front and center in the culture and the community.

Featuring performances by Kathy Bates, Jane Fonda, Salma Hayek, Kerry Washington, Rosario Dawson, Diane Lane, Suheir Hammad, Marcia Gay Harden, Sarah Jones, Brittany Murphy, Rosie O'Donnell, Phylicia Rashad, Isabella Rossellini, Marian Seldes, Marlo Thomas, Idina Menzel, and more. Jane Fonda's involvement marks her first Broadway appearance since her 1963 role in *Strange Interlude*. Authors contributing original works written exclusively for the festival include Edward Albee, Tariq Ali, Edwidge Danticat, Anna Deavere Smith, Ariel Dorfman, Michael Eric Dyson, Nicholas Kristof, Azar Nafisi, Paula Vogel, Alice Walker, Nobel Prize winner Jody Williams, Howard Zinn, and more. Start-up support for the festival provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. Lead corporate support provided by Verizon.

With marquee events with performances by celebrated actors, original works by noted authors, community events throughout the five boroughs, and a citywide messaging campaign, UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC will take over New York City, putting women, their empowerment and safety directly on center stage. UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC will issue a call to action to all New Yorkers, and to the

world: Demand an end to violence against women and girls and become an active participant in ending it.

"Through V-Day, we have witnessed the power of art to transform and galvanize change. It's time to be bold, to amplify our efforts and to take our movement to end violence against women to the next level. V-Day was born in New York City and UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC takes our message directly to the people of New York. Together, we will make New York City the first safe place for women and girls," stated Playwright/V-Day Founder and Artistic Director Eve Ensler.

Founded in 1998 on the principle that art inspires activism, V-Day benefit performances of Ensler's play *The Vagina Monologues* are now performed annually worldwide February - March, in thousands of colleges and communities, raising funds for local groups working to end violence against women and girls. V-Day events have taken place in all fifty United States and in over 81 countries from Egypt to Australia to Kenya to the Philippines, raising well over \$35 million to date.

Today, V-Day is a model of empowerment philanthropy and public awareness, inviting women and men to use art and performance to raise funds and awareness in their own communities. This New York City-focused campaign will utilize the key elements of performance and theater to raise consciousness and funds and increase the dialogue about violence against women locally, nationally and globally.

Joined by artists and community organizations, V-Day will work to raise the awareness level in New York City concerning the issue of violence against women and girls, educate people about the issue, and encourage citizens to take action to end it. We are poised at a historic moment for women and girls around the world, and the festival is an unprecedented opportunity to create change around the issue of violence against women and girls.

#### **MARQUEE EVENTS**

Four marquee events produced by V-Day will include involvement from the following well-known actors: Kathy Bates, Kate Clinton, Rosario Dawson, Jane Fonda, LisaGay Hamilton, Marcia Gay Harden, Salma Hayek, Suheir Hammad, Sarah Jones, Christine Lahti, Diane Lane, James LeCesne, Idina Menzel, Brittany Murphy, Kathy Najimy, Cynthia Nixon, Rosie O'Donnell, Phylicia Rashad, Shiva Rose, Isabella Rossellini, Marlo Thomas, Kerry Washington and others. *Participation and event details to be confirmed.*

#### **Necessary Targets, By Eve Ensler (Monday, June 12th, Studio 54)**

A once-in-a-lifetime reading of *Necessary Targets*, a groundbreaking play about women and war, the violence of dark memories, and the enduring resilience of the human spirit. With Academy Award winners Kathy Bates, Jane Fonda and Marcia Gay Harden, Shiva Rose, Tony Award winner Marian Seldes, Kerry Washington, and more.

Tickets from \$15 - \$30: [www.ticketcentral.com](http://www.ticketcentral.com)  
or call 212.279.4200

VIP and All Access Tickets – 212.921.9070

#### **A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant and A Prayer: Writers on Violence Against Women and Girls (Monday, June 19th Hammerstein Ballroom)**

World renowned writers including Edward Albee, Tariq Ali, Michael Cunningham, Ariel Dorfman, Michael Eric Dyson, Nicholas Kristof, Kathy Najimy, Anna Deavere Smith, Alice Walker, Howard Zinn and more, come together to address the issue of violence against women, contributing original pieces and bringing their particular vision, talent and take on the issue. Performances by La Chanze, Kate Clinton, Rosario Dawson, LisaGay Hamilton, Charlotte Martin, Brittany Murphy, Cynthia Nixon, Isabella Rossellini, Marlo Thomas, and more.

Tickets \$25 General Admission: [www.ticketcentral.com](http://www.ticketcentral.com) or call 212.279.4200

VIP and All Access Tickets – 212.921.9070

#### **Any One Of Us: Words from Prison (Wednesday, June 21st, Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center)**

Presented by V-Day, the American Civil Liberties Union and the New York Civil Liberties Union, this event will bring forth raw voices of fierceness and honesty written by women from prisons across the nation, moving forward toward healing, understanding, and change, ultimately impacting laws and the treatment of incarcerated women. Performances by Salma Hayek, Mindy McCready, Rosie O'Donnell, Phylicia

Rashad, Kerry Washington, and more. Sponsored in part by The New York Women's Foundation.  
Tickets \$15 General Admission: [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org) or call 212.721.6500  
VIP and All Access Tickets – 212.921.9070

**It's Hard Out Here For A Girl: Brooklyn Represented in Language and Sound  
(Sunday, June 25th, Brooklyn Museum)**

Toni Blackman, Suheir Hammad, Georgia Me, Ishle Park, Maysoun Ziyad, Urban Word and the Community Word Project will join V-Day to speak out, act out, and bring the community together to create a safe haven for women and girls. DJ Reborn will spin.

Tickets from \$10 - \$15: [www.ticketcentral.com](http://www.ticketcentral.com) or call 212.279.4200  
VIP and All Access Tickets – 212.921.9070

**TICKETS FROM \$10, ON SALE NOW:**

**ALL ACCESS:**

**For an all access pass to all four marquee theater events, call  
212-921-9070.**

**\$150 VIP All Access Ticket. Includes a good seat at the 4 events, admission  
to the AVA Lounge Party on June 12th and the backstage tour at Lincoln  
Center.**

**\$40 All Access Ticket. Includes one seat at all 4 events. Limited number  
available!**

**INDIVIDUAL TICKETS:**

**For individual tickets to *Any One of Us: Words From Prison* only, call CenterCharge at  
212-721-6500 or visit [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org).**

**For individual tickets to *Necessary Targets, A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant and A Prayer, and It's Hard Out  
Here for a Girl*, contact Ticket Central at 212.279.4200 or visit [www.ticketcentral.com](http://www.ticketcentral.com).**

**Visit [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org) for festival information, including links to all of the  
above.**

**COMMUNITY EVENTS IN ALL FIVE BOROUGHES**

A key element of the Festival is a grassroots campaign to bring anti-violence events directly into communities throughout the five boroughs. V-Day has convened a working group of local organizations working to end violence against women and girls in their communities. The working group is coordinating local events throughout the city. All community events will be listed on a master calendar available via the festival website. Sponsored by The Avon Foundation. Attached is the full list of Community Events.  
(As of 05/17/06)

**Run Until The Violence Stops, 5K Run (Tuesday, June 27th Prospect Park,  
Brooklyn 7pm)**

V-Day dreams of a world where there is no more violence, and women feel safe at any time of day or night. Women and men will run through the park, proudly demanding an end to the violence. For race information, please visit [www.nyrr.org](http://www.nyrr.org) or call New York Road Runners 212-921-9070.

**MEN & BOYS INVOLVEMENT**

V-Day has convened a committee, V-Day Men, which includes Steve DiSalvo, Byron Hurt, David Jones, Jackson Katz, Don McPherson, Sanjay Rawal, Victor Rivers and Quentin Walcott. V-Day Men will develop and conduct a workshop for 200 young men from NYC, involving community leaders, activists, multimedia tools, and celebrities. In addition to a core curriculum breaking down the issues surrounding the roots of violence toward women, a series of creative tools will be employed, including a writing/expression session, from which a small group of participants will be selected to present their pieces to the public at It's Hard Out Here For A Girl/Brooklyn Represents: Language and Sound. The curriculum will be designed to be replicated in communities

across the U.S. and around the world. Sponsored by The Avon Foundation.

### **CITYWIDE MESSAGING CAMPAIGN**

A messaging campaign will take over the city's buses and subways, newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, newspapers, websites, calendars, newsletters and magazines stopping all New Yorkers in their tracks and inviting them to join us in our effort to end violence against women and girls.

Education about the issue will be key to each element of the festival and messaging campaign. At each event, audiences will be given a declaration of facts about violence and actions they can take to end it. Young men participating in the men's retreat will be educated on violence against women and girls and then given a creative space to take that information and transform it into spoken word. Anti-violence literature will be available at every UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS: NYC event including the high-profile performance events and the community events throughout the five boroughs.

With interest already growing, V-Day has designed the festival so that it may be replicated in other cities around the country and the globe, creating a model of empowerment philanthropy to raise funds and public awareness locally in those communities, featuring local talent and highlighting local groups.

###

**About V-Day:** V-Day is a global movement to end violence against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of Playwright/Founder Eve Ensler's award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues*. In 2006, more than 2700 V-Day events in 1150 communities and colleges took place in the U.S. and around the world. To date, V-Day has raised over \$35 million and educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns including the Karama program in the Middle East, funded over 5000 community-based anti-violence programs, reopened shelters, and funded safe houses in Kenya, South Dakota, Egypt and Iraq.

94 cents of every dollar goes straight to ending violence against women and girls, not to covering administrative costs. V-Day keeps costs low by operating as a "virtual organization." Incorporated as a 501(c) 3 charity in the state of California, the V-Day staff works in regions around the U.S. and world, primarily through volunteers and with a small paid staff. Eve Ensler, V-Day's founder and artistic director, remains a volunteer. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan/Kate Fisher  
(212) 253-1823 [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-Day Brings 'Comfort Women' to the U.S. for Speaking Tour as Part of the 2006 Global V-Day Campaign for Justice**

**TOUR INCLUDES VISITS TO U.S. CONGRESS AND COLLEGES IN NEW YORK, RHODE ISLAND, AND MASSACHUSETTS**

February 14, 2006 – From February 17-22, V-Day is hosting two South Korean 'comfort women' survivors for a U.S. speaking tour to coincide V-Day's 2006 benefit season and spotlight campaign. Kim Ok Sun and Yong Soo Lee, will visit Congress and colleges in New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, along with V-Day Special Representative Hibaag Osman and the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery's Kyang Joo Hye and Heisoo Shin.

The euphemism 'comfort women' was coined by imperial Japan to refer to young females of various ethnic and national backgrounds who were forced to offer sexual services to the Japanese troops during the Asia/Pacific Wars between 1932 and 1945.

The tour is the result of years of collaboration between V-Day and 'comfort women' activists in their struggle for justice. As part of the V-Day 2006 Spotlight: Global V-Day Campaign For Justice To 'Comfort Women,' the tour will provide the 'comfort women' with the opportunity to take action in the U.S., to generate direct support of their goal to sink Japan's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council until a formal apology and reparations have been made, and to speak to college students, community audiences, and press.

The U.S. speaking tour will kick off with a Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill, sponsored by Rep. Lane Evans (R-IL) to be attended by lawmakers and legislative aides. The tour will visit colleges in New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, magnifying local V-Day organizer's focus on the Global Campaign's actions with public speaking engagements recounting riveting personal accounts of Japan's human rights abuses, and linking to local benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues."

Each year, V-Day spotlights a particular group of women who are experiencing violence with the goal of raising awareness and funds to put a worldwide media spotlight on this area and to raise funds to aide groups who are addressing it. This year, the issue of the comfort women will reach benefit performances in 1150 colleges and communities in 54 countries. Local organizers will highlight the issue in a variety of ways including the performance of a new monologue written by Playwright/V-Day Founder Eve Ensler based on 'comfort women' testimony and entitled "Say It," documentary film screenings, educational materials, and the donation of 1-10% of their proceeds to the spotlight campaign. (A copy of the monologue follows below.)

**TOUR SCHEDULE**

WASHINGTON D.C – FRIDAY February 17  
Congressional Briefing, 2pm  
Location: Room 1116 Longworth HOB, Capitol Hill

NEW YORK – SATURDAY February 18  
V-Day NYC event, 3:00PM

Tagine Restaurant

Documentary screening of "Until the Violence Stops" and Q&A with the survivors, and photo exhibition  
Location: 537 Ninth Ave. (bet. 39th & 40th Sts.) New York, NY, 10018

NEW YORK – SUNDAY February 19

V-Day Marymount Manhattan College event, 3:00PM

Documentary screening of "Until the Violence Stops" followed by Q&A with the survivors, and photo exhibition  
Location: Regina Peruggi Room, 221 East 71st Street (bt 2nd & 3rd), 2nd floor of the Main Building

RHODE ISLAND – TUESDAY February 21

V-Day Roger Williams University event, 7:00PM (Reception, 6:00PM)

Short film followed by panel with survivors and local experts from RI, Q&A, and photo exhibition  
Location: University Lecture Hall, Bristol campus

MASSACHUSETTS – WEDNESDAY February 22

Westfield State College V-Day event, 4:00PM

Panel and discussion followed by reception

Location: Scanlon Banquet Hall

**For interviews with Ms. Ok Sun Kim, and Ms. Yong Soo Lee, please contact Susan Celia Swan/Kate Fisher at (212) 253-1823. (Translation is required.)**

###

**The Global V-Day Campaign for Justice to 'Comfort Women'** In 2002, local organizers of V-Day Philippines honored 'comfort women' survivors in their V-Day benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues" for an audience of 8,500. After the show, Eve Ensler promised the Filipina survivors that V-Day would work with them until justice was served. Eve's interview with them is featured in V-Day's award-winning documentary film, "Until the Violence Stops."

The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery yielded additional links across East and Southeast Asia, and V-Day Special Representative Hibaq Osman convened organizations from eight countries in Seoul in November 2004 to discuss how V-Day could support the ongoing advocacy for 'comfort women' survivors. Hosted by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted into Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, the international planning meeting culminated in the declaration of the Global V-Day Campaign for Justice to 'Comfort Women.'

Since February 2005, the Global Campaign member organizations have held events at the UN Commission of the Status of Women, presented a petition with 550,000 signatures to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, sponsored a Global Day of Action with simultaneous protests in front of Japanese embassies around the world, and organized 60 days of survivor testimony in front of The Hague to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII.

**Background on "Comfort Women":** The euphemism 'comfort women' was coined by imperial Japan to refer to young females of various ethnic and national backgrounds who were forced to offer sexual services to the Japanese troops during the Asia/Pacific Wars between 1932 and 1945. Some were minors sold into 'comfort stations'; others were deceptively recruited by middlemen; still more were detained and forcibly abducted. Estimates of the number of 'comfort women' range between 50,000 to 200,000.

In the early 1990s, Korean victims of Japan's military sexual slavery broke their silence and came forward nearly a half century after WWII, followed by other survivors in China, Taiwan, North Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Timor L'Este. Now the aging survivors are dying off one by one without redress from the Japanese government, which still denies legal responsibility. In South Korea, the elderly 'comfort women' survivors have held demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy every Wednesday for 13 years, calling for justice and reparations for the unanswered war crimes.

**Biographies: Ms. Ok Sun Kim** (born in 1923 in Andong, a southeastern city of South Korea)

At the age of 15, Ms. Ok Sun Kim was forcibly drafted by the Japanese police. She was transported through Busan to Taiwan, where she was kept for 8 years in sexual slavery for the Japanese soldiers until the end of WWII. In 1946, she was able to return to Busan and made a living by doing various kinds of menial work. Due to the side effects of her atrocities as a 'comfort woman', she had her uterus removed. She is living alone in Yecheon, North Gyungsang Province.

**Ms. Yong Soo Lee** (born on 13 December 1928, in Taegu, Korea)

When Yong Soo Lee was 8 she went to Talsong Elementary School in Taegu, but had to give up within a year. But she didn't give up learning. When she was 12 she went to evening classes, where she used a Japanese name, Yasuhara Riyosyu. At the age of 15, Yong Soo Lee was forcibly drafted by the Japanese soldiers. It was autumn 1943. She was transported through Kyung Joo to Taiwan, where she was kept for 2 years in sexual slavery for the Japanese soldiers until the end of WWII. When she was 17, the war was over. At the age of 18, she was able to return to her home, it was 1946. She lives alone in Taegu.

**Ms. Joo Hye Kyang** (staff, Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan)

Ms. Joo Hye Kyang has been working for three years at the Korean Council. Her main responsibilities are to take care of the more than 100 survivors of the Japanese military sexual slavery who are living scattered all across South Korea. Joo Hye is also in charge of training the volunteers and networking with other organizations. If needed, Joo Hye can speak about the activities of the Korean Council and the present situation of the issue, but she will need translation.

**Dr. Heisoo Shin** (Representative, Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan)

Dr. Heisoo Shin has been working for the Korean Council for 14 years since 1992. As an activist cum scholar, she has been working for women's human rights for the last 30 years nationally, regionally and internationally. She is also a commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, as well as an expert of the UN CEDAW(Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).

**Ms. Hibaaq Osman** (V-Day Special Representative and Karama Chair)

As Special Representative, Hibaaq Osman has directed V-Day's work in Africa, Middle East, and Asia since 2002, leading delegations to Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, And India to form collaborations with local women activists. Hibaaq launched V-Day Karama, an innovative approach that works in-depth to connect local women across the Middle East and North Africa through building national and regional networks to ending violence against women in July 2005. A senior fellow at the Academy for Political Leadership and Participation at the University of Maryland, Hibaaq remains a frequent author, advisor, and keynote speaker in the field of international women's rights, peace and conflict resolution, politics and human rights in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

**About V-Day:** V-Day is a global movement to end violence against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of Playwright/Founder Eve Ensler's award-winning play "The Vagina Monologues." In 2006, more than 1150 colleges and communities will produce 2700 V-Day events in the U.S. and around the world. To date, V-Day has raised over \$30 million and educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the efforts to end it, crafted international educational, media and PSA campaigns, reopened shelters, and funded over 5000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in Kenya, South Dakota, Egypt and Iraq. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. <http://www.vday.org>



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan/Kate Fisher  
(212) 253-1823 [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY 2006 ANNOUNCED: VAGINA WARRIORS: THE NEW REVOLUTION**

**THOUSANDS OF V-DAY BENEFIT EVENTS TO PLACE GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT  
ON JUSTICE TO 'COMFORT WOMEN'**

*From Dar es Salaam to Charlotte, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, Over 750 Communities Join V-Day*

**November 15, 2005** – In 2006, there will be a “new revolution.” V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls founded by playwright Eve Ensler, today announced “Vagina Warriors: The New Revolution” as the theme for the movement’s 2006 campaigns and grassroots events. From Dar es Salaam to Charlotte, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, V-Day will expand on the successful 2005 season, during which over 2500 V-Day benefit events were presented by volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the issue of violence against women and girls, raising nearly \$4 million and benefiting over 1000 anti-violence groups.

V-Day’s 2006 theme “**Vagina Warriors: The New Revolution**” celebrates new activists and leaders who are working to end violence against women in their communities. Vagina Warriors are the women and men who have often experienced violence personally or witnessed it within their communities and dedicated themselves toward ending such violence through effective, grassroots means. V-Day 2005 productions around the world from Ethiopia to China; Indiana to India; Croatia to Finland selected and honored Vagina Warriors in their communities generating attention, newspaper articles, and raising funds to support their work.

This year, V-Day events worldwide will build on the momentum by recognizing new warriors and inspire even more to join the movement. Vagina Warriors: The New Revolution will bring to light faces new and old with one thing in common – tireless and creative commitment to ending violence against women.

While event registration continues, at this time over 1000 colleges and communities are confirmed to present V-Day 2006 benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” in 40 countries from February – March. Each community typically stages two-three nights in a row, due to popular demand and totaling 2000 fundraisers in all. Organizers on 466 college campuses have registered, the most in V-Day’s history. To date, V-Day event locations include Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Botswana, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mozambique, Saipan, Suriname, Tanzania, Wales and almost every state in the United States.

**2006 Spotlight: Justice to ‘Comfort Women’**

Each year V-Day spotlights a particular group of women who are experiencing violence with the goal of raising awareness and funds to put a worldwide media spotlight on this area and to raise funds to aide groups who are addressing it. On the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II, V-Day joins women and men around the world in calling for justice to ‘Comfort Women’ survivors. The euphemism ‘comfort women’ was coined by imperial Japan to refer to young females of various ethnic and national backgrounds who were forced to offer sexual services to the Japanese troops during the Asia/Pacific Wars between 1932 and 1945. Some were minors; others were deceptively recruited by middlemen; still more were detained and forcibly abducted. Estimates of the number of ‘comfort women’ range between 50,000 to 200,000.

In the early 1990s, Korean victims of Japan’s military sexual slavery broke their silence and came forward nearly a half century after WWII, followed by other survivors in China, Taiwan, North Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia,

Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Timor L'Este. Now the aging survivors are dying off one by one without redress from the Japanese government, which still denies legal responsibility.

The V-Day 2006 Spotlight joins the 'comfort women' survivors and women's groups from East and Southeast Asia in calling for justice and reparations for the unanswered war crimes. V-Day is working with groups on the ground in Asia to plan a major V-Day event during Summer 2006 to bring maximum attention to this issue. V-Day is also working to raise awareness of human trafficking as we recognize the relationship between the story of the 'comfort women' and modern day human trafficking.

### **“The Good Body” and V-Day’s Annual Fundraiser in Los Angeles**

Eve Ensler is currently on North American tour of her newest play “The Good Body.” The tour will reach 20 US cities from October 2005 until its culmination in April of 2006. A portion of proceeds from the tour will be benefit V-Day.

With “The Good Body.” Eve turns her unique eye to the rest of the female form. Whether undergoing botox injections or living beneath burkhas, women of all cultures and backgrounds feel compelled to change the way they look in order to fit in. “The Good Body” merges cross-cultural explorations with Eve’s own personal journey coming to terms with her ‘less-than-flat, post-40’s stomach.’

Thanks to Eve and the producers of the play, this year V-Day’s 2006 annual fundraiser will take place on February 1, 2006 at the Wadsworth Theater in Los Angeles, CA. The evening’s performance will be a benefit for V-Day, followed by a reception with V-Day star supporters. The V-Day L.A. 2006 Committee includes Jane Fonda and Paula Weinstein, Honorary Chairs, Gail Berman, Carole Black, Ilene Chaiken, Robert Dowling, Sally Field, Kristin Hahn, LisaGay Hamilton, Christine Lahti, Lauren Lloyd, Dylan McDermott, Pat Mitchell, Kathy Najimy, Dawn Ostroff, Marc Platt, Emily Scott Pottruck, Shiva Rose, Cari Ross, Paula Wagner, Kerry Washington, Kimberly Paisley Williams and Rita Wilson (list in formation). The night will mark the opening of Eve’s Los Angeles run as well as her Los Angeles stage debut.

### **Karama Program In Africa, Asia & The Middle East**

The Karama Program, which launched in Cairo in July 2005 under the leadership of V-Day Special Representative Hibaaq Osman, will continue to expand with offices set to open in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia over the next three years. To strengthen and link community-based strategies in each country, the Karama Program will organize training workshops, convene national and regional meetings, promote art and culture events, provide funding for program implementation and give communications support to the emerging networks ending gender based violence. <http://www.vday.org/karama>

### **Help Stop Violence While You Shop/V-Day’s Online Store**

V-Day’s partners continue to create unique products to raise money and awareness towards ending violence against women and girls. V-Day features these products at its online store – [www.vday.org/store](http://www.vday.org/store) – and our sponsors and partners offer them on their sites and through special promotions. New for 2006, Unique Swiss Skin Care has announced its support of V-Day by contributing 25% of the retail sales of all Unique Swiss Skin Care products through their Double the Magic program. Products include 24-Hour Age Defying Cream, Renewal Mask and Gentle Cleanser. All Unique Swiss Skin Care Products are made with natural biotechnological ingredients derived from plant extracts and biological cultures, assuring no chemical agent contamination.

Also, featured at [store-vday.org](http://store-vday.org) are the following: V Tea specially developed for V-Day by Zhená’s Gypsy Tea is a white tea with vanilla, a delicate, healing potion dedicated to helping end the cycle of violence against women and girls worldwide. A special February promotion to be announced. V-Day Jewelry by GK DESIGNS for JEWELSERV, creators of sterling silver inspirational message jewelry, features a line designed exclusively for V-Day. New jewelry designs are a collaborative effort between GK Designs and Jewelserv, and are born to serve as a reminder and to further raise awareness of violence against women. New designs include: a V-Day Beaded Bracelet; V-Day and Warrior Sterling Silver Key Chains; Vagina Warrior Sterling Silver Necklace and the Vagina Warrior charm bracelet. V-Day offers its own line of t-shirts and hats including the Vagina Warrior American Apparel T-shirt and Vagina Warrior Ski Cap, V-Day T-shirt, and V-Day baseball caps featuring the official logo. The store also offers links to purchase V-Day products from Vosges Haut Chocolate, the V-Day documentary film “Until The Violence Stops,” the V-Day book “Vagina Warriors,” and more. EILEEN FISHER

[www.eileenfisher.com](http://www.eileenfisher.com) and LUNA bar [www.lunabar.com](http://www.lunabar.com) continue to support V-Day and its efforts to end violence against women and girls around the world.

For the latest on the V-Day 2006 Vagina Warriors: The New Revolution schedule of events and campaigns, visit [vday.org/events](http://vday.org/events). V-Day's 2006 sponsors and NYC events will be announced in January.

###

**About V-Day:** V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop violence against women and girls, including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sexual slavery.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. In 2005, over 2500 V-Day benefit events were presented by volunteer activists in the U.S. and around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

Performance is just the beginning. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and produces innovative gatherings, films and campaigns to educate and change social attitudes towards violence against women including the documentary *Until the Violence Stops*; community briefings on the missing and murdered women of Juarez, Mexico; the December 2003 V-Day delegation trip to Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan; the Afghan Women's Summit; the March 2004 delegation to India; the Stop Rape Contest, the Indian Country Project, and Love Your Tree.

In Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, V-Day commits ongoing support to build movements and anti-violence networks. Working with local organizations, V-Day provided hard-won funding that helped open the first shelters for women in Egypt and Iraq, sponsored annual workshops and three national campaigns in Afghanistan, convened the "Confronting Violence" conference of South Asian women leaders, and donated satellite-phones to Afghan women to keep lines of communication open and action plans moving forward. Through the Karama Program based in Cairo, V-Day works to build in-depth networks ending violence against women and girls in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world, in 81 countries from Europe to Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, and all of North America. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of *Worth Magazine's* "100 Best Charities." In eight years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$30 million.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

[www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan (212) 253-1823 [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY ANNOUNCES  
THE LAUNCH OF THE KARAMA PROGRAM  
&  
THE OPENING OF BAYAT HAWA,  
THE FIRST SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN IN CAIRO**

August 17 2005 - On July 17 2005, V-Day launched the Karama Program, envisioned by V-Day Special Representative, Hibaaq Osman, in Cairo, Egypt. Karama, the Arabic word for "dignity," is a partnership with nine countries of the Middle East and North Africa: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan. Through women's organizations and inter-regional agencies such as the Arab League and the African Union, Karama will bring together women, men, governments, activists and artists to examine the impact violence makes on women's health, education, and economics, and to come up with campaigns at the national, regional, and international levels to end violence against women, tailored to the cultural realities of the target country. Headquartered in Cairo, Karama will work closely with organizations working in different sectors and on different issues in each society, such as education, health, religion, art, economics, and policy.

V-Day's staff attended the launch and activities in Cairo including Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler and Executive Director Jerri Lynn Fields. As part of the launch, V-Day met with an NGO roundtable of national and regional partners, donors, and select women leaders representing five of the nine affiliated countries across the region. The attendees included: Nancy Bakir, Chief of the Social Affairs in the Arab League; Fahima Hashim of Sudan; Afaf Jabiri of Jordan; Rugia Makki Arab Women's Investors Association; Nadine Abu Zaki of Lebanon, and numerous activists from NGOs in Egypt. Karama's website will launch in late August.

**V-Day Opens First Safe House in Egypt**

On July 18, V-Day attended the opening of *Bayat Hawa*, Egypt's first safe house for women and children suffering from domestic violence. *Bayat Hawa* aims to break the cycle of violence by creating a no-tolerance approach to domestic violence and by providing women with a safe, secure and confidential alternative to staying in an abusive relationship. Created by the Association for the Development & Enhancement of Women (ADEW), the program will offer comprehensive services strategically designed to help its residents deal with the trauma and effects of abuse. *Bayat Hawa* will be a space where women and children can begin healing, find reprieve from abuse, discover support and community with others dealing with similar issues and receive professional assistance to develop the tools necessary to build healthier and safer lives.

*Bayat Hawa* will offer: private and family counseling; medical care and health awareness programs; legal assistance; empowerment seminars; skills training and financial literacy; childcare and children's programs; literacy and educational services; advocacy; transitional planning and support; access to micro credit loans; transportation; and play therapy for traumatized children.

*Bayat Hawa* represents an important step in combating domestic violence in the region. The program will develop and promote a working definition of domestic violence to create common understanding of the problem. ADEW promotes dialogue and raises awareness among Egyptian women, local communities, the media and policy-makers and in conjunction with *Bayat Hawa* will provide an appropriate service model for other agencies working to end violence against women and children.

**Karama Launch in Lebanon**

Immediately following the Karama launch in Cairo, Eve Ensler and Hibaaq Osman, V-Day Special Representative and Karama Chair, traveled to Beirut to meet with women's rights organizations, political leaders, and national media for the launch of the Karama Program in Lebanon. During their visit, Nadine Abuozaki, director of Al Hasna magazine, announced a partnership between the Karama Program and the magazine. Through this partnership, Al Hasna' magazine will represent Karama and coordinate a number of activities for the program with Lebanese civil society groups. Eve, Hibaaq and Nadine Abouzaki also visited the head of the parliamentary educational committee, Bahea Al Hareri, who ensured them that the women's

empowerment at the educational level is a vital issue and gave her full support to Karama; Mrs. Nora Joumblatt of Beiteddine festival, who suggested ways to support the Karama Program and its goals; and BAHIA Hiriri, President of the Women's committee in the Arab inter-Parliamentary Union. Al Hasna' magazine is also joining forces with the Beirut International Women's Forum to produce "The Vagina Monologues" on March 2-3, 2007 in Beirut.

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Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of *The Vagina Monologues* to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. In 2005, over 2500 V-Day benefit events were presented by volunteer activists in the U.S. and around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

Performance is just the beginning. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and produces innovative gatherings, films and campaigns to educate and change social attitudes towards violence against women including the documentary *Until the Violence Stops*; community briefings on the missing and murdered women of Juárez, Mexico; the December 2003 V-Day delegation trip to Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan; the Afghan Women's Summit; the March 2004 delegation to India; the Stop Rape Contest, the Indian Country Project, and Love Your Tree.

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**EVE ENSLER'S 'THE GOOD BODY' GOES ON TOUR  
OPENING OCTOBER 4th IN SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA**

*Tour To Reach 20 US Cities October 2005 – April 2007*

**Eve Ensler**, the author of the international phenomenon **THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES**, plans to explore and expose even more -- when she tours North America in her new play **THE GOOD BODY**. Ms. Ensler will play in 20 cities in 2005 – 2007, beginning October 4, at the Ordway Theatre in St. Paul, Minnesota.

**THE GOOD BODY**, written and performed by **Eve Ensler**, debuted on Broadway in October 2004, following a workshop production at the Seattle Repertory Theatre and an engagement at ACT in San Francisco. **THE GOOD BODY** is directed by **Peter Askin**. The tour is produced by Harriet Newman Leve, in association with Ron Nicynski, Mark Kaplan and Michele Crowley. Associate producers are Allison Prouty and Laura Wagner. The tour is managed by 321 Theatrical Management.

When **Eve Ensler** takes the stage, she doesn't just perform a play...she causes a sensation. In **THE GOOD BODY** she takes an inside look at the outside, exploring the cultures of beauty, food and desire through the eyes of women around the world. This provocative, hilarious, and profoundly moving show promises to be no less extraordinary than Eve's previous triumph, **THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES**, which inspired a worldwide revolution. A portion of proceeds from the tour will be benefit V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls which Ensler founded.

With **THE GOOD BODY**, **Eve Ensler** turns her unique eye to the rest of the female form. Whether undergoing botox injections or living beneath burkhas, women of all cultures and backgrounds feel compelled to change the way they look in order to fit in.

**THE GOOD BODY** merges cross-cultural explorations with Eve's own personal journey coming to terms with her 'less-than-flat, post-40's stomach.' The *Associated Press* called **THE GOOD BODY**, "Insightful, entertaining and hilarious," the *San Francisco Chronicle* described it as, "Passionate, funny, frank, revealing, even shocking," while *The New York Times* said **THE GOOD BODY** is, "forthrightly funny, bristling with wisecracks and exotically harvested snippets of wisdom."

**THE GOOD BODY** features set designs by Tony nominee **Robert Brill** (*Assassins*), costume design by recent Tony Award winner **Susan Hilferty** (*Wicked*) and lighting design by **Kevin Adams** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*). Sound design and original music is by **David Van Tieghem** (*Doubt*), co-designed by Jill B.C. Du Boff (*The Constant Wife*).

**EVE ENSLER** (*Playwright/Performer/Activist*), award-winning author of *The Vagina Monologues*, most recently performed her new play *The Good Body* on Broadway in NYC, at ACT in San Francisco, and in a workshop production at Seattle Repertory Theatre. Ensler is founder and artistic director of V-Day, a global movement to end violence against women and girls. *The Vagina Monologues* has been translated into more than 35 languages and has run in theaters worldwide, including sold-out runs at Off-Broadway's Westside Theater and on London's West End (2002 Olivier Award nom., Best Entertainment). Her play *Necessary Targets*, set in a Bosnian refugee camp, opened Off-Broadway at the Variety Arts Theatre in February 2002, following a hit run at Hartford Stage Company. Ensler's other plays include *Conviction*, *Lemonade*, *The Depot*, *Floating Rhoda* and *the Glue Man* and *Extraordinary Measures*. *The Good Body*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and *Necessary Targets* have been published by Villard/ Random House, who will also publish Ms. Ensler's upcoming books *I Am an Emotional Creature* and *V-World*.

Ensler is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship Award in playwriting, the 2002 Amnesty International Media Spotlight Award for leadership, and the Matrix Award (2002). She is an executive producer of "What I Want My Words to Do to You," a documentary about the writing group she has led since 1998 at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. The film had its world premiere at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, where it received the Freedom of Expression Award; the film premiered nationally on PBS's "P.O.V."

**PETER ASKIN** (*Director*). Recent NY credits: Eve Ensler's *The Good Body* on Broadway; *Privilege* by Paul Weitz; *Trumbo*, starring Nathan Lane followed by a rotating cast, including Paul Newman and Brian Dennehy; Mike O'Malley's *Searching For Certainty*; John Leguizamo's *Sexaholix*, *Spic-O-Rama*, and *Mambo Mouth*. He also directed the New York,

London and Los Angeles productions of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, and Dael Orlandersmith's *Monster, Beauty's Daughter* and *The Gimmick*. Past New York credits include: *Dinner With Demons*; *How It Hangs*; *Linda Her*; *Beauty Marks*; *Ourselves Alone*; *Reno*; *Reality Ranch*; and *Down An Alley Filled With Cats*. Film: Peter has written (and co-written) a number of screenplays including *Smithereens* and Paramount Classic's *Company Man* (which he also co-directed with Doug McGrath), with Sigourney Weaver, John Turturro and Woody Allen. He recently finished adapting Martin Millar's *Good Fairies of New York*, and is currently adapting *Someone Else's Child* by Nancy Woodruff. Television: Peter directed the HBO production of *Spic-O-Rama* for which he won a Cable Ace. He was the Supervising Producer for John Leguizamo's HBO/Fox comedy series "House of Buggin'."

**THE GOOD BODY, written and performed by Eve Ensler**, opens October 4th at the Ordway Theatre in St. Paul, Minnesota, and will tour through April 2007. For more information visit <http://www.thegoodbody.com> For booking information contact The Road Company at (212) 302-5200.

**Performance dates:**

2005

|                |                  |                                       |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Oct 4-9        | St. Paul, MN     | Ordway Center For The Performing Arts |
| Oct 11-16      | Philadelphia, PA | Annenberg Center                      |
| Oct 18-23      | Stamford, CT     | Stamford Center For The Arts          |
| Nov 1 - Nov 6  | Charlotte, NC    | Blumenthal Performing Arts Center     |
| Nov 8-27       | Miami, FL        | Coconut Grove Playhouse               |
| Nov 29 - Dec 4 | Raleigh, NC      | Fletcher Opera Theater                |
| Dec 6-11       | Dallas, TX       | Majestic Theatre                      |

2007

|                    |                     |  |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Jan 3-8            | To Be Announced     | IN EARLY SEPTEMBER                             |
| Jan 10-15          | To Be Announced     | IN MID NOVEMBER                                |
| Jan 17-22          | Washington, DC      | Lincoln Theater                                |
| Jan 31 - Feb 12    | Los Angeles, CA     | Wadsworth Theatre                              |
| Feb 15-19          | Detroit, MI         | Music Hall                                     |
| Feb 21-23          | Portland, OR        | The Wonder Ballroom                            |
| Feb 24-26          | Seattle, WA         | The Moore                                      |
| Feb 28 - March 5   | Skokie, IL          | Centre East                                    |
| Mar 7 - 19         | Toronto, Canada     | To Be Announced                                |
| March 21-26        | Boston, MA          | The Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College |
| March 28 - April 2 | Fort Lauderdale, FL | Parker Playhouse                               |
| April 18-23        | Vancouver, Canada   | The Vogue                                      |
| April 25-30        | Scottsdale, AZ      | Scottsdale Center for the Arts                 |



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**V-TOUR FOR V-DAY 2005: V-DAY FOUNDER EVE ENSLER TO VISIT LOCAL V-DAY EVENTS IN COLLEGES AND CITIES FROM NEW HAVEN TO BRUSSELS  
BOOKSIGNINGS OF *VAGINA WARRIORS* SCHEDULED IN SELECT CITIES**

**MORE COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY V-DAY BENEFITS THAN EVER!  
THOUSANDS OF COMMUNITY-BASED V-DAY BENEFIT EVENTS OF THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES TO TAKE PLACE FEBRUARY - MARCH 2005 IN THE U.S. (ALL 50 STATES) AND AROUND THE WORLD**

**February 9, 2005** - V-Day Founder/Artistic Director and Playwright “The Vagina Monologues” Eve Ensler will visit a selection of colleges and communities who are staging V-Day benefits of her play “The Vagina Monologues.” Eve will also appear at book signings for V-Day’s first book *Vagina Warriors* in some cities.

V-Day’s 2005 season of benefits will be the largest number of events in its history. From February – March 2005, over 2,500 V-Day benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” will take place in 1,116 communities (719 college events and nearly 400 community events) around the world including Australia, Belgium, El Salvador (in a women’s prison), Costa Rica, Jamaica, Nigeria, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Ethiopia and all 50 states in the United States.

V-Day organizers around the globe will highlight and raise funds for the 2005 Spotlight Women of Iraq: Under Siege. Many are selling V-Day’s book *Vagina Warriors* and DVD “Until The Violence Stops” at their events. Overall, our local organizers are getting the word out on their events so effectively that in January alone local, national and web media articles about V-Day reached 4.9 million readers.

Each stop on the tour offers unique highlights. In Kingston, Rhode Island, Eve will meet local women and sign copies of *Vagina Warriors* at a book signing organized by Rose Bell, originally from Ukiah, CA, home of the famous vagina quilts profiled in *Until The Violence Stops*. Rose recently relocated to Rhode Island and took her V-spirit with her. At Yale, the event organizers have invited Pakistani actress/activist Nighat Rivzhi to be a part of the cast—V-Day first met Nighat in the first-ever V-Day event in Pakistan in 2003 and again last year in India. From New Haven, the tour to the Midwest first to Indiana where Eve will visit Wabash college, a liberal arts college for men who have invited women from a local college to perform in the play, to Chicago to support college and worldwide campaign events and then back to Indiana, to V-Day Notre Dame in South Bend. Each year, Notre Dame has a healthy discussion about the play and the real women’s stories it portrays. This is the first year that Eve will attend their on campus performance. Traveling overseas, Eve will help Amnesty International in Ireland launch their “Stop Violence Against Women” Campaign. In Reykjavik, she will attend their local V-Day and meet with community leaders, including Iceland’s female President. In April, V-Day Europe is producing a organizer workshop where V-Day activists as well as a gala benefit, *JourV*, featuring performances by Eve, Isabella Rossellini, Dame Anita Roddick, Lara Fabian, Katja Riemann, Cosma Shiva Hagen, and Laurence Biboy.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS STATEMENT FROM V-DAY UGANDA 2005**

**June 27, 2005** - This is a day of celebration. It is a day that we come together to pay tribute to the hundreds and thousands of people in Uganda and elsewhere who contributed their support through donations, and ticket sales for the banned V-Day performance of the play *The Vagina Monologues*.

As we all recall, the purpose of the V-Day Campaign was, first, to highlight the appalling violence meted out against women and girls in this country. The other was to mobilise resources for our sisters in Northern Uganda, who have been deeply affected by the ongoing conflict. The violence committed against women and girls has been one of the most devastating aspects of this conflict. These atrocities carried out by both the LRA and the UPDF, have occurred for the most part without redress for the victims. It is a source of great shame and discomfort that fellow citizens of this country are living under a regime of terror, displacement and despair even as we sit here today.

Violence takes many forms, from that which is sanctioned and normalised by cultural practice to that which takes place in the context of conflict. Violence against women and girls has yet to be adequately dealt with by the state and all our other institutions. Every minute somewhere in this country, a woman or young girl is subjected to one form of violence or another. Women are raped, battered, physically assaulted, mutilated, forced into marriage, forced to stay in abusive marriages, forced out of marriages, abducted, forcefully impregnated, forced to abort, it is endless. All of this happens, and society looks on in muted silence. It buries its head in the sand, looks the other way, trivialises the problem and moves on. In Uganda, where we boast of traditional family values, it beggars belief that we all allow this pandemic to go unabated. It is tragic that many of our religious leaders and institutions, especially here in Kampala that boast about upholding moral values, sit idly by as millions of women and girls undergo this degrading, appalling treatment.

And the minute women open their mouths to speak; to say enough is enough; to hold a mirror up to society and say 'look, this is how you treat women like me, but we are taking it no longer', then all, descend on these women like a tonne of bricks. They are demonised and condemned. They become the enemy who must be silenced at all costs for daring to do the unthinkable. For these are women who dare to hold society to account. Many religious leaders and others were virtually out on the street, strenuously opposing the play. Why one wonders do they not condemn with equal vigour the acts of violence we read and hear about every day in our media? It is these same voices, which include faith based groups that now oppose measures to protect the rights of women in the context of marriage. One wonders what they are upholding, moral values or patriarchy?

Whether it is through the benefit production of *The Vagina Monologues*, or demanding state measures for the protection of women's rights, or even exposing abuse, the establishment regards women who do this as very dangerous. It looks for ways to 'keep these women in their place.' And that becomes its sole preoccupation. Rather than take up its responsibilities, it seeks to vilify those who call on it to do so.

On 15th February 2005, The Media Council followed this pattern with consummate precision. It caved in to the hysterical pressure from members of the public and also from certain sections of government, by censoring the play *The Vagina Monologues*. This it did on the grounds that the play 'corrupts public morals'. The Media Council chose to silence a play that has been staged in over 76 countries and translated into over 35 languages. A play which has mobilised public attention and action to bring to an end the crisis that is violence against women. A play which has led to greater understanding of the impact of violence on women's lives, and created opportunities for dialogue and the development of strategies to address it. Zimbabwe, staged *The Vagina Monologues* soon after it was banned in Uganda, in a church hall in Harare. MPs in Kenya, Members of the European Parliament have actually taken part in this play. Pakistan, Egypt, Burkina Faso, India, The Democratic Republic of Congo – all of these countries and more have staged this play. Adults in Uganda on the other hand, according to the Media Council ruling, are not capable of making up their own minds about *The Vagina Monologues*. It paternalistically decided to 'shelter' the public from this play, and in our view inadvertently played into the hands of those who use the apparatus of the state to illegitimately silence all forms of dissent. Its credibility and ability to analyse issues independently has been severely compromised as a result of the decision it took on this fateful day.

Throughout the saga of The Vagina Monologues, we were heartened by one thing. Many thousands of Ugandans were outraged by the hypocritical and hysterical outcry, and the ridiculous ruling by The Media Council. They connected to the issues that the play was expressing and engaged with it in a mature, sober and carefully thought out way. We received messages of support and solidarity from so many people, including government officials, MPs, the media, radio stations, and other members of the general public both here and internationally. Of all the tickets that we sold, only 20 people claimed their money back. The rest donated it in solidarity. This is a powerful form of protest and refusal to capitulate to the hypocrisy displayed by so many, not to mention the abuse of the rights of this country's citizenry to freely associate and express their views.

We wish to thank you all for your wonderful support. Your generosity has enabled us to collect so far, Ugshs 20,563.562.00 (USD \$11,805.00) for our sisters in Kitgum and Lira. We wish to thank you all for sticking by this campaign. Your support has been a great source of strength and has given us the impetus to continue.

We remain committed to working for an end to violence, intolerance, inequality and injustice. With your continued support, we know we will succeed.

And to our sisters and daughters in Kitgum and Lira, you are in our hearts. Go with this very small token of our solidarity. Your courage and determination in the midst of all the devastation, is a testament to your strength and an example to us all. We undertake to strengthen our efforts to bring to this terrible conflict to an end.

Thank you all very much.

V-Day Uganda 2005



**V-Day 2004 "Celebrating Vagina Warriors" is the Movement's Biggest Year in its Seven-Year History:  
Over 2300 Events and Campaigns Raise \$5 Million and Generate Global Awareness (2004)  
Over 5000 V-Day Events in 76 Countries Since Inception in 1998**

June 07, 2004 – Today, V-Day announced that its 2004 season (January –March 2004) was the global movement's biggest awareness and fundraising year to date with over \$5 million dollars raised. The theme for the 2004 season "Celebrating Vagina Warriors" was reflected throughout the high profile series of V-Day benefits, events and campaigns. Key 2004 highlights included the first documentary about the movement "Until The Violence Stops;" the V-Day and Amnesty International March on Juarez, Mexico to honor the over 300 missing and murdered women and to support the families and groups working for justice; the two-week intensive V-Day 2004 Visit to India: Celebrating the Indian Woman Warrior featuring events in Mumbai, Himachal, and Delhi; and over 2,300 V-Day 2004 benefit productions of "The Vagina Monologues" in February and March in 1,100 communities and colleges worldwide benefiting local community anti-violence programs.

In mounting its annual campaigns, V-Day draws inspiration from the thousands of Vagina Warriors – volunteers, activists, sponsors, media, and supporters – who work worldwide to end violence against women and girls in their communities. Each V-Day event helps a woman tell her story, inspires others to give, engages the local media, enables women to expand their networks, and encourages entire communities to act together to end violence against women.

**Highlights of V-Day 2004 "Celebrating Vagina Warriors"  
"UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS"**

Directed by first time director Abby Epstein, UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS documents how "The Vagina Monologues" grew into an international grassroots movement called V-Day to stop violence against women and girls. In 2002, eight hundred cities around the world participated in V-Day by staging benefit performances of The Vagina Monologues. UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS shows women from locations as diverse as Harlem, Ukiah, California, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the Philippines, and Kenya, uniting and courageously revealing their intimate and deeply painful experiences with abuse ranging from rape to female circumcision. In emotionally charged interviews and performances, everyday and celebrity women such as Rosie Perez, Salma Hayek, Tattoo Cardinal, Jane Fonda, and LisaGay Hamilton embrace their bodies, reconcile their pasts, and bond together to break the silence that surrounds abuse. More than just testimonies and performances, UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS is a film about empowerment and the importance of dialogue in the healing process. A celebration of women reclaiming their bodies

- The documentary world premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on January 17, with two additional screenings added due to popular demand. Vagina marketing became all the rage at Sundance with Vagina Warrior ski caps becoming the in demand item for Park City attendees.
- Six U.S. communities hosted benefit screenings to raise funds and awareness for local groups working to end violence against women and girls: Santa Fe, NM; San Francisco and Ukiah, CA; Miami (Film Festival); Atlanta, GA; White Plains, NY.
- The documentary premiered February 17, commercial free on Lifetime Television, with nearly 1 million viewers. Immediately after the east coast broadcast, Tampax hosted the first-ever live V-Day web-cast from The University of Tulsa (OK), where thousands of women and men logged on to ask V-Day questions about the film and the movement.
- Media coverage of the documentary appeared in hundreds of national and local broadcast and print outlets including CNN, TODAY, NPR, PEOPLE, TV Guide, USATODAY.com and many more. V-Day supporters Jane

Fonda and Glenn Close joined Eve for television, radio and print interviews and junkets. Early reports from our print monitoring service found over 400 articles from February 1-29, 2004 reaching over 50 million people.

**SPOTLIGHT ON JUAREZ, INTERNATIONAL MARCH ON JUAREZ, MEXICO** Through the Mexico City production of "The Vagina Monologues," direct support to Casa Amiga and other grassroots groups, and the efforts of thousands of activists, V-Day has been working throughout Mexico and internationally to raise awareness about the missing and murdered women of Juarez. For V-Day 2004, Juarez was our Spotlight issue placing the issue in front of millions in the U.S. and internationally through the over 2000 V-Day benefits that took place in February - March. While there have been victories in terms of awareness and discussions, the struggle is not over as more bodies have recently been found and the murders remain unsolved.

"The City of Murdered Women," V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler's essay on the missing and murdered women of Ciudad Juarez, appeared in the March issue of Marie Claire magazine.

- Working closely with Amnesty International, V-Day placed stories on the issue in PEOPLE, the Los Angeles Times, CosmoGIRL and more.
- On February 13 the V-Day delegation – including Congresswomen Jan Schakowsky (IL) and Hilda Solis (CA), Jane Fonda, Sally Field, Christine Lahti, Lifetime Television CEO Carole Black, PBS CEO Pat Mitchell, Lifetime EVP Public Affairs Meredith Wagner – met with mothers whose daughters have been murdered or are missing; immediately following the American Consulate hosted a reception welcoming the V-Day community to Juarez to support our efforts to raise awareness and to end the violence against women in Juarez. The newly appointed special prosecutors met with Eve and members of the delegation to discuss changes and progress – or the lack of – in these cases
- On V-Day, February 14, over 7,000 people traveled to Juarez - thousands crossing the bridge from neighboring El Paso, TX - to stand up for the women of Juarez.
- Following the march, thousands gathered for a community luncheon in advance of the historic, first performance of "The Vagina Monologues" in Juarez by a bilingual cast included Lilia Aragon, Marinitia Escobedo, Laura Flores, Monica Alicia Juarez, Jane Fonda, Sally Field and Christine Lahti.
- The march and the performance garnered international media coverage, saturating the U.S., UK, Mexico and Latin America via CNN, Univision, Telemundo, local ABC, CBS, NBC stations, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, BBC, The Guardian, the Sunday Times and more.
- VICTORY! On March 8 V-Day was notified by a local community organization in Juarez that as a result of the March on Juarez the Chihuahua State's Attorney had resigned.

**V-DAY INDIA 2004: CELEBRATING THE INDIAN WOMAN WARRIOR** Through V-Day Special Representative Hibaaq Osman's leadership and vision, art and activism united to end violence against women in India. A V-Day delegation, along with star supporters Jane Fonda and Marisa Tomei, traveled to India March 8-20 to celebrate South Asian women's activism.

- A gala benefit production of "The Vagina Monologues" was staged on International Women's Day (March 8) in Mumbai. The Indian cast, along with Jane, Marisa and Eve wowed the standing room only audience.
- The V-Day delegation toured a SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action) hospital/shelter in the largest slum in Mumbai. SNEHA was a beneficiary of the V-Day Mumbai event and is now a V-Day awardee.
- V-Day met with representatives of Citibank in Mumbai who are supporting the work of several groups working to end violence against women and girls followed by a 14-hour (one-way) bus journey to the state of Himachal, near Dharamsala (the Tibetan seat of government) to support Jagori, the host organization in Delhi, to celebrate the opening of their new learning center for women and girls. During the stay at the Norbulingka Institute (founded by the Dalai Lama with a mission is to preserve Tibetan culture) the group visited the Buddhist nunnery and lit 1001 candles as a blessing for the learning center and for peace and non-violence.
- In Delhi, V-Day, along with Jagori and SANGAT, hosted a three-day conference: "Confronting Violence: Recounting Resistance, Envisioning Justice." The conference objective was to analyze how feminists have faced Violence Against Women, what connections have been made with other phenomena like communalism, fundamentalisms, globalization, privatization etc. A dynamic group of over 70 women from South Asian (including Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bangladesh, and India) attended the conference. Eve performed a one-woman show of "The Vagina Monologues" for conference attendees and special guests that brought down the house.
- V-Day co-sponsored an evening of Women Artists for Justice, Harmony and Peace, a concert in an open-air

venue. The voices of youth, the dancing of women, the strength of poetry and Eve's powerful words were a beautiful, celebratory way to end V-Day India 2004.

- Indian print, radio and television media covered the trip two weeks in advance with multiple stories on the celebrities, the events, and the activist conference. Throughout the visit Indian media saturated the message of V-Day's mission to end violence against women via interviews with Eve, Hibaaq Osman, Jane Fonda and Marisa Tomei.

(A full report from V-Day Special Representative, Hibaaq Osman, will be released this summer.)

**2,300 V-DAY EVENTS IN 1,100 COMMUNITIES** Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produced annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. Since V-Day launched its very first event in 1998, the movement has encountered incredible women working to end violence against women and girls in their communities.

These women have often experienced violence personally or witnessed it within their communities and dedicated themselves toward ending such violence through effective, grassroots means. They have been the very heart of V-Day. This year, V-Day's 2004 events and campaigns celebrated these women whom Eve has dubbed 'Vagina Warriors.' V-Day productions around the world selected and honored Vagina Warriors in its own community.

- Eve's solo performance to a sold-out, SRO audience in Tulsa, OK benefited The Spirits of Hope: A Coalition Addressing Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking in Oklahoma Indian Country. After Eve's performance Jane Fonda performed "Emotional Creature," a new piece written by Eve.
- The first-ever transgendered V-Day was staged in Los Angeles. It was a spectacular evening of celebration, performance and education about the horrific violence that transgendered women endure. A highlight of the evening was the performance of a new piece by Eve written specifically for the event, "He Beat the Girl Out of My Boy...Or So He Tried."
- In March, models, actresses and politicians joined together to stage V-Day Nairobi, a performance of "The Vagina Monologues" benefiting the Rape Crisis Centre at the Nairobi Women's Hospital in Nairobi and the V-Day Safe House, the first safe house in Kenya for girls running away from early marriages and female genital mutilation.
- In an event of corporate activism, V-Day LUNA (Luna Bar, a V-Day sponsor) united corporate employees and community members – including Tiffany Schlain of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness – in two sold out benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" that raised close to \$20,000 and celebrated vaginas in the boardroom.
- Eve supported Amnesty International's London launch of a two year Stop Violence Against Women Campaign with AI Secretary General Irene Kahn and actor Patrick Stewart. The event received worldwide media coverage.
- V-Day Europe launched on February 14. With the support of the European Commission, national coordinators in the UK, France, Germany and Luxembourg have joined forces to promote V-Day in Europe. Between 14 February and mid-March, V-Day performances of "The Vagina Monologues" took place in Trier, Saarbrücken, Frankfurt am Main, Bochum and Bremen, in Paris, Brest and other cities in France. To mark International Women's Day, an international team in Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg hosted a V-Festival throughout the month of March 2004 with a wide range of women's art events, performances of "The Vagina Monologues" in French and German and culminating in a transnational, multilingual V-Day performance on 14 March 2004 that brought together all European partners in a celebration of the movement. On March 8 at London V-Day Westminster, the first ever performance of "The Vagina Monologues" by women politicians of all political parties, took place. MPs including Joan Ruddock, Caroline Spelman, Sandra Gidley and Oona King, as well as the Home Office minister Caroline Flint, performed alongside Jerry Hall, Meera Syal and Anita Roddick before a packed audience at the Criterion Theatre in London! In addition, there were over 70 local performances across the UK.
- Overall media coverage of local V-Day 2004 events continues to grow in campus and regional papers. Events receive major local coverage as well as placement in key papers such as The Boston Globe and Chicago Tribune and on local TV stations nationwide.

Also of note in 2004 are the V-Day events that did not happen – Beijing, China; Chennai, India; and on select Catholic college campuses. In Beijing, China, authorities shut down a production of 'The Vagina Monologues' translated into Chinese. International media - including The New York Times - covered the banning reporting that

the Chinese character for vagina is half anatomical and half vulgar. Despite a successful staging earlier in the week in Mumbai, in the southern Indian city of Chennai, a local police commissioner banned the V-Day India 2004 benefit production of "The Vagina Monologues" scheduled to include Jane Fonda and Marisa Tomei, claiming that the play posed a threat to public order. Indian media covered the story extensively as well as the performance and events in Mumbai and Delhi.

In the U.S., the Cardinal Newman Society continued its campaign against V-Day benefits at Catholic colleges. Several V-Day productions at Catholic Colleges and Universities moved to off campus locations. As in previous years, these negative efforts - which are the minority considering that 1100 communities staged successful V-Day benefits - generated considerable publicity about the play and the issue of violence against women in local and national media including USA Today.

As the 7th V-Day season comes to an end, V-Day thanks the thousands of women and men activists – the true vagina warriors worldwide – who brought V-Day into their communities, raising funds and awareness, and making sure that not another woman or girl will experience violence. Since V-Day's first NYC benefit in 1998, the movement has expanded to 76 countries with V-Day events worldwide from Angola to China to Ethiopia to Israel to Yugoslavia to Zimbabwe. To date, over 5000 benefit productions of The Vagina Monologues have taken place, raising funds for local grassroots antiviolence groups and educating millions of people about the issue of violence against women and girls.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**"UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS," FIRST DOCUMENTARY ABOUT V-DAY TO BE RELEASED ON LIFETIME TELEVISION, FEBRUARY 2004**

**V-DAY, THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WILL RELEASE ITS FIRST DOCUMENTARY ENTITLED "UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS" IN FEBRUARY 2004 ON LIFETIME TELEVISION.**

New York, NY-- November 11, 2003—

In 2002, eight hundred cities participated in a movement to end violence against women and girls called V-Day, which grew out of Eve Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues." "Until the Violence Stops" is a one hour commercial-free documentary that follows the grassroots impact of V-Day in five international communities while exposing the pervasive and cultural forms of violence that women experience all over the world. Directed by Abby Epstein, the story begins at a star-studded V-Day benefit at Harlem's Apollo Theater and travels to regional events in Ukiah California, the Philippines and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, culminating in the opening of the first V-Day Safe House for girls in Kenya. What emerges is an alternately devastating and hopeful look at the global and grassroots efforts in motion to stop violence against women and girls.

Featuring appearances by Tantoo Cardinal, Rosario Dawson, Eve Ensler, Jane Fonda, LisaGay Hamilton, Salma Hayek, Amy Hill, Rosie Perez, Isabella Rossellini.

"Until the Violence Stops" will premiere on Lifetime as part of the Network's ongoing, Emmy Award-winning campaign "Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women," which includes extensive on-air original programming, online content and community outreach to change lives and laws for the better.

Expect more details about the documentary and V-Day's 2004 campaign "Celebrating Vagina Warriors," as well as Lifetime's "Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women" initiative.

About V-Day: V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery.

V-Day stages large-scale benefits and produces innovative gatherings, films, and programs (such as the upcoming 2004 documentary "Until The Violence Stops;" community briefings with Amnesty International on the missing and murdered women of Juarez, Mexico; The December 2003 V-Day delegation trip to Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan; The Afghan Women's Summit; The Stop Rape Contest; and The Indian Country Project) to educate and change social attitudes towards violence against women.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. In 2003, over 1,000 V-Day benefit events were presented by volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising \$4 million.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first six years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$20 million.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

LIFETIME is the leader in women's television and one of the top-rated basic cable television networks. A diverse, multi-media company, LIFETIME is committed to offering the highest quality entertainment and information programming, and advocating a wide range of issues affecting women and their families. In September 2003 Lifetime was awarded the prestigious Governors Award from The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (ATAS) for its advocacy on its "Stop Violence Against Women" initiative. LIFETIME Television, Lifetime Movie Network, Lifetime Real Women and Lifetime Online, are part of LIFETIME Entertainment Services, a 50/50 joint venture of The Hearst Corporation and The Walt Disney Company, as is Lifetime magazine, which debuted in April 2003.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**REPORT FROM V-DAY-SPONSORED AFGHAN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM RELEASED**

**OVER 75 AFGHAN WOMEN WORKED TOGETHER TO DEVELOP REALISTIC WORKING STRATEGIES TOWARD NON-VIOLENT SOCIETY, WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND INCREASED POLITICAL POWER**

New York, NY—May 1, 2003—

As part of its ongoing efforts to support Afghan women, V-Day returned to Afghanistan March 8-11, 2003 to offer an Afghan Women's Leadership Program to women from different grassroots and community based organizations within Afghanistan.

V-Day Special Representative Hibaaq Osman convened the program, in consultation with political advocacy training expert Eleanor LeCain, Afifa Azim, head of the Afghan Women's Network, and V-Day staffer Barbara Wien.

Over 75 Afghan women attended the three-day session in Kabul which focused on building skills in political advocacy and identifying the key challenges for women through listening, supporting and finding ways to amplify the work that the women are already doing on the ground. The training program built on the work that had been started at the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy (Brussels 2001) and the V-Day Kabul Talks (March 2002).

Osman along with V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler, and Executive Director Jerri Lynn Fields welcomed the group with greetings from women around the world. "You survived and have stamina," stated Osman, "You have everything you need to be leaders. We will not teach you, but work with what you already have. We learn from you, too. This seminar will strengthen our work together for peace and democracy."

Ensler began the conference by asking the women to imagine V-World, a world where they lived free of violence against women and girls. The ensuing discussion was beautiful, moving and hopeful, setting the stage for the program during which the conference attendees spent two days strategizing how Afghanistan could become a country free of violence against women. A key outcome of the conference was the development of working strategies to:

- \* Provide education for girls and women
- \* Improve women's economic situation
- \* Change the negative aspects of culture and tradition
- \* Increase awareness of women's rights in the Constitution and Sharia law
- \* Increase the political power of women

While in Afghanistan, V-Day made an overall commitment of \$120,000 in awards - \$60,000 as a direct result of the three day leadership program in Kabul - to groups that will assure women's participation in the construction of the new constitution in Afghanistan, coordinate working women in Afghanistan, involve lawyers in the community, teach music to young girls and provide shelter for orphans and hospital services for refugees.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the complete report.

V-Day's Afghan Women's Leadership program was sponsored by V-Day with support from Mama Cash and the Global Fund For Women.

About V-Day: Inspired by Playwright Eve Ensler's play "The Vagina Monologues," V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2003, more than 1000 V-Day benefit events - produced by local volunteer activists - took place around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising funds for local groups within their communities. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TWO STAR-STUDED BENEFITS ON TWO COASTS WITH ONE MISSION:  
TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS:**

**V-DAY NYC 2003 ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 WITH CLAIRE DANES & MARISA TOMEI & V-DAY LA 2003 ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24 WITH ROSARIO DAWSON & SHIVA ROSE**

*V-Day NYC and V-Day LA to feature private benefit screening of select scenes from the upcoming documentary about V-Day, "Until The Violence Stops," plus new monologues written by Eve Ensler*

New York, NY – February 7, 2003 –V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, announced today its two showcase benefits of the season. On February 13 in NYC and February 24 in LA, actresses including Claire Danes, Marisa Tomei, Rosario Dawson, and Shiva Rose will join "The Vagina Monologues" playwright and V-Day Founder Eve Ensler, as V-Day expands from theatrical performances into film at its two major fundraisers this year - V-Day NYC and V-Day LA 2003. For the first time, these V-Day events will feature a private benefit screening of selected scenes from an upcoming documentary about V-Day, entitled "Until The Violence Stops." Both events will include performances of select **new** monologues, written by Ensler, performed by Danes and Tomei in NYC and by Dawson and Rose in Los Angeles. V-DAY LA 2003 is presented by The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW) and V-Day.

"Until The Violence Stops" represents a new avenue for V-Day to raise awareness and funds. (V-Day's journey into film has auspicious beginnings as the documentary about Ensler's writing group at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women, "What I Want My Words To Do To You," received the "Freedom Of Expression" award at this year's Sundance Film Festival). This work in progress documentary feature will ultimately take the viewer to nine countries capturing authentic vagina monologues via interviews with local survivors of sexual trafficking, battery, rape, incest and female genital mutilation and, along the way, revealing how each culture is fighting to protect their women and children and how the V-Day movement is building safe houses and schools, raising new funds for existing programs and saving lives worldwide. (Details on its theatrical/broadcast release are forthcoming.)

The V-Day NYC and V-Day LA benefit events are part of the global movement to end violence against women and girls' 2003 benefit season, which features over 1000 V-Day benefit productions of "The Vagina Monologues" around the world. Locations range far and wide, including V-Day San Diego (U.S.); V-Day Peshawar (Pakistan), V-Day Brigham Young University (U.S.), and V-Day Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), all raising funds and awareness for local anti-violence groups. Now in its fifth year, V-Day has raised \$14 million in funding for thousands of grassroots groups around the world.

On February 13, **V-DAY NYC 2003** features Eve Ensler, Claire Danes, and Marisa Tomei, with special guests Rosie Perez, Isabella Rossellini, Elisabeth Rohm, and more. Seating for the screening will begin at 6:15 P.M. at The Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street Between 8<sup>th</sup> And 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues, NYC. Screening and performances start at 7 PM and will be followed by dinner and dancing. Tickets begin at \$500, and can be purchased via phone at (212) 921-9070, online at [www.vday.org/events](http://www.vday.org/events), and via email at [vday@jfm2productions.com](mailto:vday@jfm2productions.com).

**\*\*TO REQUEST MEDIA CREDENTIALS FOR THIS EVENT,  
PLEASE CALL SUSAN SWAN/WENDY SHANKER (212) 445-3288, [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)\*\***

On February 24, **V-DAY LA 2003**, presented by The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW) and V-Day, features Eve Ensler, Rosario Dawson, Shiva Rose and event chairs Calista Flockhart, Sherry Lansing, & Rose. LACAAW is a private, non profit 31-year old sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse prevention center. The screening is at 7:00 PM at The Director's Guild Theatre, 7920 Sunset Boulevard. Tickets are \$250, VIP tickets are \$500 (includes VIP Pre-Party). Sponsorships available. Purchases can be made via phone at 310-491-1401, online at [www.vday.org/events](http://www.vday.org/events), and via email at [info@blueroomevents.com](mailto:info@blueroomevents.com).

**About V-Day:** Inspired by Playwright Eve Ensler's play "The Vagina Monologues," V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2003, more than 1000 V-Day benefit events - produced by local volunteer activists - are scheduled around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising funds for local groups within their communities.

In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. <http://www.vday.org>

**About LACAAW:** The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW) is a private, non profit 31 year old sexual assault, domestic violence , child abuse prevention center. One of the first organizations of its kind in the country, LACAAW serves over 50,000 people annually and its programs have had national impact. The organization's mission is the elimination of sexual & domestic violence. <http://www.lacaaw.org>



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**V-DAY ENTERS ITS FIFTH YEAR WITH A VISION:  
V-DAY 2003: FROM V-DAY TO V-WORLD  
V-DAY ASKS WOMEN AND MEN WORLDWIDE TO ENVISION AND CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

*Anti-Violence Movement Continues To Expand With Over 1000 V-Day Benefits including V-Day Islamabad and V-Day Peshawar (Pakistan), V-Day Brigham Young University (U.S.), V-Day Hong Kong (China), V-Day Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), V-Day Bombay (India), and many more...*

New York, NY - January 29, 2003-- V-Day announced today its vision and plans for 2003. The vision statement, drafted by V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler and entitled "From V-Day to V-World," calls upon women and men worldwide to envision a world without violence against women and girls and to join V-Day in working to create it. This message runs throughout all elements of this year's campaign, including over one thousand V-Day benefit events around the world; the first ever PSA campaign in print and on TV; a spotlight on Native American and Canadian First Nations women; an initiative to end gender-based violence in Africa, Asia and the Middle East; and corporate sponsorship.

2003 marks V-Day's fifth birthday. Since the first V-Day benefit performance of Ensler's award-winning play "The Vagina Monologues" took place in NYC on February 14, 1998, V-Day has grown into a worldwide social and activist movement, raising funds for thousands of local groups and opening safe houses in Africa and schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In five short years, the movement has raised over \$14 million dollars for these local and international groups working to end violence against women and girls in their communities.

In 2003, over one thousand V-Day benefit events will take place worldwide, raising funds and awareness to end violence - an issue that affects one in three women around the world (UNFPA, 2000). As part of the V-Day Worldwide and College campaigns, V-Day benefits feature a performance of "The Vagina Monologues" and are scheduled between January 31 and March 9, 2003. For the first time, these V-Day benefits will include two new community-written monologues, one by women and one by men, envisioning a world without violence, V-World. On February 3, a special V-Day event will take place on the Taos Pueblo in Taos, NM honoring this year's V-Day Spotlight on Native American and Canadian First Nations Women.

In 2002, over 800 V-Day benefits were held in over 35 countries. This year the V-Day movement welcomes the addition of hundreds of cities and colleges participating for the first time, including: V-Day Peshawar and V-Day Islamabad in Pakistan, V-Day Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as V-Day Trinidad and Tobago and V-Day Brigham Young University in Salt Lake City, UT. To locate the event(s) nearest you or by country, visit <http://www.vday.org/events>.

V-Day's Ensler, along with Executive Director Jerri Lynn Fields, will travel to over 21 V-Day locations to meet organizers, activists, beneficiaries, and journalists. To date, their itinerary includes: V-Day Peshawar and V-Day Islamabad, Pakistan; V-Day Kabul, Afghanistan; V-Day Bombay, India; V-Day Paris, France; V-Day Zagreb, Croatia; V-Day Vukovar and V-Day Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; V-Day Taos and Santa Fe, NM; V-Day NYC, V-Day Mexico City, Mexico; V-Day Juarez, Mexico; V-Day Sydney, Australia; V-Day Kauai, Hawaii; V-Day Los Angeles, CA; and V-Day Florence, Italy. At a stop in Melbourne, Australia, Ensler will perform "The

Vagina Monologues" with local performers and politicians - a special event benefiting V-Day and Australia's Emily's List at the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Women's Congress.

#### New avenues for the V-Day message

With its 2003 V-World inspired campaign, V-Day will raise awareness via new avenues in the media and new alliances in the fashion and beauty industries. Beginning in January, a unique PSA (Public Service Advertising) campaign will unfold in print magazines and, in February, in a companion series of TV spots. Today, January 29, a new, multi-featured website ([www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org)) launches online.

- \* February 18 at 7:00PM ET/PT, Lifetime Television will air an "Intimate Portrait" on Founder Ensler.
- \* The March issue of Marie Claire will feature an exclusive essay by Ensler, set against a series of commissioned photographs by an award-winning group of Magnum photojournalists.
- \* Paula Dorf's "V-Day" lipstick and Julie Haus' "Fashion For Peace: V-Day" clutch both hit stores nationally in January.
- \* January 21-February 4, BARNEYS NEW YORK's flagship NYC store will dedicate its window display to V-Day, courtesy of Creative Director Simon Doonan.
- \* January 21 - February 14, Eileen Fisher's 24 U.S. stores will feature V-Day/V-World themed windows.

#### Expanding programs at home

V-Day strives to bring attention to grassroots and often invisible groups of women. For 2003 V-Day expands its "Afghanistan Is Everywhere" campaign to "Afghanistan Is Everywhere: Spotlight on Native American and First Nations women." This campaign-wide Spotlight will place the issue in front of thousands. As part of the Spotlight, each local V-Day organizer is encouraged to donate up to 10% of their proceeds towards Native American and First Nations women.

#### A new international initiative to end violence – Africa, Asia and the Middle East

The V-Day team, led by Hibaaq Osman, Special Representative to Africa, Asia and the Middle East, is currently working in partnership with diverse women's networks in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Pakistan, India, Kenya and Afghanistan. The goal is to strengthen and support their common agenda of ending violence against women and girls, and bring an end to bride burnings, female genital mutilation (FGM), honor killings, sexual assault, rape and many other forms of gender-based violence. The team collaborates only with those organizations that have a commitment to working across ethnic, religious, and class lines.

For International Women's Day (March 8), V-Day is planning a return fact-finding visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The delegation will include Ensler, Fields, Osman, and members of international women's groups, funders, and celebrities who will continue dialogue, advance education, and build a plan for action.

#### Corporate support

V-Day applauds the generosity and commitment of its corporate sponsors. V-Day 2003 sponsors are: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., Eileen Fisher, Eziba, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Hearst Magazines, Julie Haus Handbags, Lifetime Television, Liz Claiborne, Luna Bar, Marie Claire, Organon (Makers of NuvaRing), Paula Dorf, Peacekeeper, Tampax, Time Inc., and Vosges Haut Chocolat.

As V-Day 2003 unfolds, updated information, images and reports from the events and campaigns will be available at <http://www.vday.org> on an ongoing basis.

#### About V-Day

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery. V-Day provides funding to create and nurture innovative programs to stop the violence.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities.

V-Day itself stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2002, more than 800 V-Day benefit events were presented by local volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

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V-Day 2003 Events:

The V-Day Worldwide Campaign: V-Day benefit productions of "The Vagina Monologues" are confirmed to date in over 370 cities nationally and abroad to raise awareness and money for local groups in their communities that work to stop violence against women and girls. 40 countries are participating this year including Ghana, Botswana, Spain, Netherlands, Pakistan, Jamaica and Trinidad and

Tobago. For the first time, V-Day Nairobi will take place, presenting the premiere performance of "The Vagina Monologues" in Kenya. Organizers present the theatrical production from start to finish including casting, location scouting, ticket sales, publicity, and more. For the up to date listing of cities, <http://www.vday.org/world>.

The V-Day College Campaign: Much like the Worldwide Campaign, the College Campaign will bring V-Day benefit productions of "The Vagina Monologues" to more than 660 colleges and universities around the world in an effort to raise awareness and money for local anti-violence groups and empower the leaders and activists of the future. The number of international college V-Day's has increased dramatically this year in both the number of participating schools outside of the US and also in the variety of places that are represented. Of the 662 schools, 105 (about one sixth) are outside of the US and 61 (about one tenth) are outside of North America in places including England, Mexico, the Philippines, Malaysia, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Australia, Kenya, China, Germany, the Czech Republic and Spain. For the listing of participating schools to date, go to <http://www.vday.org/college>.

Spotlights and Programs:

Afghanistan Is Everywhere: Spotlight on Native American and Canadian First Nations Women, The Indian Country Project:

V-Day's decision to focus on Indian Country this year emerged from a realization of a problem that is statistically and anecdotally well-documented. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indian women is 3.5 times higher than all other races. This rate continues to rise while Indian women and girls remain invisible as an at-risk population. Indian women often feel unable to address the violence because of complicated jurisdictional problems and lack of resources. Consequently, the high rate of abuse continues, unabated. Native American activist Suzanne Blue Star Boy has joined V-Day to lead the Indian Country Project, a campaign to end violence against women on all American Indian and Canadian First Nations Peoples lands. Her work will help generate awareness and fundraising in and for Native communities across the US and Canada. In its first year, 23 V-Day's representing over 50 tribes are taking place as part of the Indian Country Project on reservations and reserves in South Dakota, Arizona, New Mexico, British Columbia, Toronto, Minnesota, Ontario, and Alaska. Tribes such as the Lakota, Algonquin, Cree, Squamish, Lil'wat Nation, Tlingit, Haida, Yup'ik, Inuit, 8 Northern Pueblos, Ojibwe, Chippewa, Mdewakanton, Chumash, Quenchan, Dakota, Athabaskin, Stl'atl'imx, Tsimpian, and Lower Sioux are just a few of the tribes participating in and benefiting from this year's V-Day events. These V-Day events will gather Native Women to collectively envision and claim a future without violence against women and girls in their communities.

Africa, Asia And the Middle East: As part of the 2003 V-World vision, V-Day has launched a new initiative to end violence against women and girls in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Key coalition-building efforts have already begun via recent listening visits in Afghanistan, Brussels, South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Palestine. In each country, meetings were held with a diverse group of politicians, grassroots leaders, artists, doctors,

intellectuals and teenagers amidst a variety of locations and activities. The team will convene a diverse, strategic core group of women and women's organizations within each country in the regions.

Poetry Contest: A V-World poetry contest inviting women and men worldwide to create poetry inspired by the question, "What will the world look like when the violence ends?" was held. Submissions were accepted as of January 2003 and the winning entries will be announced on or around Valentine's Day (Exact date TBA).

Awareness:

V-Day 2003: From V-Day to V-World: The vision statement can be read at <http://www.vday.org/vworld>.

PSA (Public Service Advertising) Campaign This is a year-long, multi-media campaign. The series of print PSA's were shot pro bono by renowned photographer Joyce Tenneson and feature celebrities including Salma Hayek, Rosario Dawson, Jane Fonda, Eve, Denyce Graves, Isabella Rossellini, Shiva Rose as well as V-Day activists from diverse countries including Kenya, Mexico, Afghanistan. PSA's are scheduled to run in Hearst magazines - including Marie Claire, O, Redbook, Bazaar and Good Housekeeping - as well as in various Time, Inc. magazines; ELLE Quebec; Velvet Park; URB; and many others. A companion TV campaign featuring celebrities including Julia Stiles, Julianna Margulies, Calista Flockhart, and everyday women speaking to the camera about what their world would look like if there was no violence, will launch in mid-February on Lifetime Television and will expand to other cable and broadcast networks throughout the year. To view the complete series of print PSA's, go to <http://www.vday.org/psa>.

Lifetime "Intimate Portrait: Eve Ensler": On Tuesday, February 18, 7PM (ET/PT), Lifetime profiles the life of V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler. The profile includes interviews with celebrity V-Day supporters, including Calista Flockhart, Jane Fonda, Glenn Close, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Rosie Perez, Dylan McDermott, Kathy Najimy and Julia Stiles. The "Intimate Portrait: Eve Ensler" and the V-Day PSA's are scheduled to air as part of Lifetime's Stop Violence Against Women Campaign.

[www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org): In late January, V-Day will be launching a new web site, to better highlight the full range of V-Day activities taking place around the world. The site will feature increased photographs and V-artwork, and more interactive features for visitors.

Marie Claire: For their annual coverage of V-Day, Marie Claire delivers a startlingly realistic look at violence against women around the world via a photo essay, created in collaboration with Magnum photos and featuring the work of Magnum photojournalists Thomas Dworzak, Maya Goded, Susan Meiselas, and Patrick Zachmann, accompanied by an exclusive essay by Ensler about her relationship with violence, and "woman on the street" comments about what V-World will look like.

Barneys New York: Red boa alert! From Tuesday, January 21 through Tuesday, February 4, the store windows will be dedicated to V-Day, as created by Barneys Creative Director Simon Doonan.

Eileen Fisher: As a valentine's call to action, in the window of every Eileen Fisher retail store, a field of hearts, like flowers, poke up from their stems. It makes you stop on the sidewalk and peer in. Each heart has a word on it, ending the sentence: "When violence against women and girls ends, I will...praise, boogie, sizzle, parade, belong...love."

Julie Haus "Fashion For Peace: V-Day" Clutch: Houston-based new handbag designer Julie Haus has designed an exclusive clutch-style handbag, the "V-Day Fashion For Peace" clutch to raise funds for V-Day. Inspired by V-Day's 2003 Vision, Haus developed the "Fashion for Peace Campaign" as a line of handbags designed to raise awareness for the organizations that fight to end violence around the world.

Paula Dorf "V-Day" Lipstick: Paula Dorf helps support V-Day with the creation of "V-Day" Lipstick, a beautiful watermelon pink shade that looks great on everyone. A portion of the proceeds will go to V-Day.

Vosges Haut Chocolat: Vosges Haut Chocolat is donating to V-Day 25% of the proceeds from the sale of their Sophie's Boîte Chapeau, an elegant hatbox filled with exotic truffles, couture cocoas and haut-chocolat.

PeaceKeeper: PeaceKeeper, a line of products for which All Profits, after taxes, are used to support women's health advocacy and human rights issues, while educating the consumer, is creating a lip gloss for V-Day, which will be soon available in retail stores and online.

# V DAY

UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS

CONTACT: Susan Celia Swan/Alex Petti, V-DAY, [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)  
Karen Duffy/BARNEYS NEW YORK, (212) 450-8696, [kduffy@barneys.com](mailto:kduffy@barneys.com)

**\*\* MEDIA ALERT \***

**CLOSING NIGHT PARTY ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 26**  
**FOR "THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES" OFF-BROADWAY**  
**IS OPENING NIGHT FOR V-DAY 2003 AT BARNEYS NEW YORK**

**COME, CELEBRATE, B.Y.O.V.!**

**JOIN EVE ENSLER, JULIA STILES, DYLAN MCDERMOTT, ISABELLA ROSSELLINI,  
CLAIRE DANES, ROSIE PEREZ, HARRY BELAFONTE, GLORIA STEINEM, TAMARA TUNIE, FREE,  
KATHLEEN CHALFANT, BETTY, PRODUCER DAVID STONE, HOWARD SOCOL, EILEEN FISHER  
& OTHER CELEBRITY GUESTS**

**BEGINNING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, BARNEYS WINDOWS CELEBRATE V-DAY**

**WHO:** Playwright "The Vagina Monologues" and V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler, Julia Stiles, Dylan McDermott, Isabella Rossellini, Claire Danes, Rosie Perez, Harry Belafonte, Gloria Steinem, Amy Irving, Gloria Reuben, Kathleen Chalfant, Hazelle Goodman, Free, Tamara Tunie, Producer David Stone, Howard Socol, Eileen Fisher, Joie Lee, Amy Love, Anjali Bhimani, Barbara Barrie, Bhaswanti Bhatenchaya, Didi Conn, Susie Estes, Hayley Mills, Geneva Carr, Loretta Swit, Mary Testa, Mikveh, Miriam Plotkin, Phyllis Newman, Sarah Jones, Sharon Gless, Swoosie Kurtz, Lois Smith, Tovah Feldshuh, Tracey Leigh, Veanne Cox, Wendy Braun, and Other Celebrity Guests...

**WHAT:** Closing night party for "The Vagina Monologues," is a celebration of the play and the women and men who made the play a worldwide success and a movement to end violence against women & girls, and the launch for V-Day 2003. As the amazing Off-Broadway production closes after a 3 1/2 year run, the **INVITE-ONLY** closing party will launch V-Day 2003 and the more than 1000 V-Day 2003 benefit performances of the play scheduled to take place worldwide between February – March and raising funds and awareness for local groups that work to stop violence against women and girls.

Light food, drinks by Campari, and dancing. Hosted by Howard Socol, CEO BARNEYS NEW YORK, and Eileen Fisher, President EILEEN FISHER.

**WINDOWS:** To kick off the celebration, from January 21st through February 4th, windows by BARNEYS NEW YORK Creative Director Simon Doonan will celebrate the play and V-Day. "The windows consist of giant V's (for V-Day) -in lieu of giant vaginas in the windows, we opted for giant V's -7 feet high and covered in marauding empowered women -tiny plastic dolls-taking over the world and having a ball. The names of the zillions of women who have performed in "The Vagina Monologues" and V-Day benefits are listed on the back wall of the window, from Karen Black to Winona and back again." - Simon Doonan

**WHEN:** Sunday, January 26, 8:30PM  
**WHERE:** BARNEYS NEW YORK, Madison and 61Street

**TO REQUEST MEDIA CREDENTIALS TO COVER THIS EVENT, CONTACT SUSAN SWAN (212) 445-3288/(917) 538-8366 or EMAIL [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)**

**V-DAY'S UPCOMING NYC BENEFIT IS V-Day NYC 2003:** featuring documentary clips and new monologues,

dinner and dancing - Thursday, February 13 at the Hammerstein Ballroom. Tickets, from \$500, can be purchased via phone (212) 921-9070, online at [www.vday.org/events](http://www.vday.org/events) <<http://www.vday.org/events>> , and via email: [vday@jfm2productions.com](mailto:vday@jfm2productions.com)

V-DAY LA 2003 takes place Monday, February 24 at the Director's Guild Theater in LA.

**About V-Day:** Inspired by Playwright Eve Ensler's play "The Vagina Monologues," V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2003, more than 1000 V-Day benefit events - produced by local volunteer activists - are scheduled around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising funds for local groups within their communities.

In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Susan Celia Swan [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY APPOINTS HIBAAQ OSMAN V-DAY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE  
TO AFRICA, ASIA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

*Based out of Washington, DC, Osman is currently working in partnership with diverse women's networks in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan and Palestine*

January 24, 2003 – As part of its ongoing mission to end violence against women and girls, V-Day is thrilled to announce the appointment of Hibaaq Osman as V-Day Special Representative to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. As V-Day's Special Representative, Ms. Osman will spearhead efforts to build broad political and social movements for women's rights at national, regional, and international levels in those regions.

The Washington, DC-based Osman is already working in partnership with diverse women's networks in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan and Palestine to strengthen and support their common agenda of ending violence against women and girls - specifically to end bride burnings, female genital mutilation (FGM), honor killings, sexual assault, rape and the many other forms of gender-based violence that plague these regions. The V-Day effort collaborates with organizations that have a commitment to working across ethnic, religious, and class lines.

Speaking about the appointment, V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler stated, "Hibaaq brings her experience in working with women in conflict areas like Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan, her unique flair for getting things done in coalition, and her passion for women to this newly created position as V-Day Special Representative to Africa, Asia, and The Middle East. I cannot think of a more talented or committed candidate: Hibaaq inspires and with her help I know that V-Day will make a real impact in the extremely challenging work of ending violence against women and girls in these politically complex and war-torn regions."

Born in Somalia and raised in Ethiopia and Sudan, **Hibaaq Osman** has been involved in women's rights issues in Africa for over 15 years. Building on her understanding of the existing cultural and political beliefs in various developing countries, she has collaborated with religious leaders, spiritual leaders, politicians, prominent individuals, scholars, women's rights activists, governmental organizations, research institutes, feminist institutions, and universities to bring women's rights issues to the forefront of the domestic and international agendas. Through her work, she has helped to establish women's rights organizations and form coalitions around women's issues, most recently SIHA (Strategic Initiatives for the Horn of Africa) to promote women's rights, peace and human development. Ms. Osman has done extensive research on conflict resolution, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), and women's rights in Islam, and was previously a Senior Fellow of the Academy for Political Leadership and Participation at the University of Maryland.

***Groundwork for the V-Day Initiative has already begun in Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan and Africa:*** The groundwork for the V-Day Initiative has already begun. From Thursday, December 11 through Saturday, December 21, 2002, Osman convened a series of visits to Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Palestine to listen intensively to women as they discussed their urgent need for women's security, equality, justice and peace.

Like previous V-Day visits, a series of meetings were held with diverse groups of women politicians, grassroots leaders, artists, doctors, intellectuals and teenagers amidst a variety of locations and activities. The V-Day delegation, comprised of several prominent U.S. women artists, activists, and philanthropists - including V-Day

Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler, V-Counsel member/Activist/Actress Jane Fonda, and Osman – attended a series of meetings to listen, discuss, learn, explore and support the work, joint peace initiatives and other strategies of women, teenagers and young girls. Following the visits, V-Day is working to amplify the women's voices in the international community and media and to bring back specific actions or recommendations to policy makers to develop real security for women and girls.

In Spring 2002, Hibaaq traveled to Kenya with Eve to attend the opening of the first V-Day Safe House - a safe haven for young girls seeking refuge from FGM and early childhood marriage; to Sri Lanka to speak at the International Conference on "The Role of Women in Peace Building and Constitution Making"; and to Uganda to explore trends and future challenges of women's rights in Africa, identify key areas of concern and to formulate recommendations to better address these challenges and concerns.

In December 2001, V-Day participated in the "Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy" (in Brussels), as one of the main sponsors and donors. As a follow-up to the Brussels Summit, Ms. Osman traveled with V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler to Afghanistan in March 2002 to participate in International Women's Day in Kabul, celebrated there for the first time in five years. In Kabul, V-Day sponsored a series of roundtable talks on Afghanistan and Pakistan, gathering together more than 100 Afghan women, including the Brussels participants, to share status updates and feedback on their situation and to encourage strategic alliances among the women's groups.

While at the Brussels summit, the participants cited numerous times that lack of communication (there was and is no telephone infrastructure in Afghanistan) prevented them from effectively working together on a common agenda. To bridge this gap, V-Day provided and delivered at the Kabul talks over sixteen satellite telephones to women's groups, including the Afghan Women's Ministry, to build better communication and develop a network among the groups.

***'Friends of V-Day' networks to be created within each country:***

On the national level, the team will convene a diverse, strategic core group of women and women's organizations within each country to become the "Friends of V-Day." The aim of the groups will be to define violence in their cultural context, identify the specific types of violence in their communities, and prioritize one campaign and one strategy to stop violence against women and girls in their country using the funds raised from V-Day benefit events. Through this inclusive, broad-based, participatory approach, the expressed needs of local partners will lead and shape V-Day's work in their area. The "Friends of V-Day" will work together as a coalition, cross-fertilizing ideas and experiences and supporting key campaigns to have maximum impact.

Taking the work to a second level, "Friends of V-Day" networks will also forge strategic alliances across borders on a regional basis to stop honor killings, bride burnings, FGM and other life-threatening issues for women, and help end the isolation that may be felt in individual countries. An annual regional meeting is planned for the "Friends of V-Day" groups to compare experiences, evaluate campaigns and develop future strategies.

**About V-Day**

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery. V-Day provides funding to create and nurture innovative programs to stop the violence. Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. V-Day itself stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2002, more than 800 V-Day benefit events were presented by local volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls. The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of *Worth Magazine's* "100 Best Charities." In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone. The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

# V DAY

UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS

## MEDIA ALERT

Contact: Susan Celia Swan [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**UK POLITICIANS INSPIRED BY V-DAY, THE  
GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS,  
PERFORM "THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES" AT  
THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE IN BLACKPOOL, ENGLAND:**

**FEBRUARY 2003 V-DAY EVENT IN THE WORKS, TO BE HELD IN FRONT OF BRITISH  
PARLIAMENT**

*Four female labour party politicians performed "The Vagina Monologues" with V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler on September 29th bringing the issues of violence against women to the center of UK policymaking*

October 25, 2002 - On Sunday September 29, 2002, four female Labour Party MP's performed *The Vagina Monologues* at the Labour Party Conference, Blackpool. While Prime Minister Tony Blair spent the day in debates regarding Great Britain's involvement in the attack on Iraq, over 200 politicians, trade unionists, civil servants, and fellow supporters of women's rights watched the female MP's: Margaret Moran MP for Luton South, Oona King MP- Bethnal Green and Bow, Linda Gilroy MP- Don Valley and Caroline Flint MP – Doncaste, and celebrity performers comedian Nina Wadia and the play's award-winning author and V-Day Founder Eve Ensler, present another view of the world - a view of a world without violence against women and girls. The performance launched the V-Day's 2003 campaign in the UK and was sponsored by UNISON, the public service trade union, as part of its campaign against violence against women.

V-Day is a global movement working towards a day when violence against women ceases and it is this vision that inspired the Labour MP's to bring the play into the heart of policy making. In the UK, V-Day is targeting politicians nationally, and in addition to the Labour Party Conference, the Scottish National Party Conference also hosted a production of the play by a group of local women. Immediately following the performance in Blackpool, plans were set forth for a full-scale V-Day 2003 benefit (V-Day Parliament 2003) in front of Parliament in February.

At the Labour party Conference, the unusual but inspired cast performed to a rapt audience and the performance succeeded in raising over £1000 to be donated to eight appointed V-Day charities: Refuge, Women's Aid Federation of England, FORWARD, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Greater London Domestic Violence Project, London Rape Crisis Centre, Southall Black Sisters and Newham Asian Women's Project. Immediately following the Labour Party performance of "The Vagina Monologues", attendees, from civil servants, to nurses, to a male elementary school teacher, to a member of the Anti-Nazi League committed to staging V-Day benefits in 2003 to raise awareness and funds to end violence against women and girls. These were all women and men determined to support V-Day and take the campaign to end violence against women to the heart of their workplaces, staging the play at conferences and Annual General Meetings and beginning a V-Day revolution.

V-Day campaigns internationally to raise awareness and funds for grassroots groups and charities that work to end violence against women through co-ordinating local V-Day benefit performances of *The Vagina Monologues* by groups of women across the world.

Earlier this year around 1000 women and men across the United Kingdom staged 54 performances of *The Vagina Monologues* bringing the message of V-Day to their local communities and raising £128,050 for local charities. This determination of spirit was honoured in a reception hosted by Margaret Moran MP as well as Patricia Hewitt and Barbara Roche, Ministers for Women, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2002. A sell-out gala, V-Day London 2002, held at the Royal Albert Hall in April boasted over 30 celebrity performers - including Isabella Rossellini, Beverly Knight,

Donna Air, Maureen Lipman, Caprice, Danni Minogue Josie Lawrence, Jenni Éclair and Lysette Antony dedicating their time and commitment to preventing violence against women.

In five years, V-Day has grown throughout the world from one benefit event in 1998 to over 800 V-Day benefits in 2002 where celebrations were held in an Anglican Church in Nova Scotia, a Maasai village in Kenya, a Lakota reservation in South Dakota, a stadium in Manila, a synagogue in Great Britain. There were sold out performances at Caesar's Palace in South Africa, The National Theater in Guatemala, The Royal Albert Hall in London, the Folies Bergeres in Paris, and the Apollo Theater in Harlem. At nearly 550 schools from Harvard to the HELP Institute in Selangor, Malaysia, from the University of the Philippines in Manila to the London School of Economics, over 7.5 million people were exposed to V-Day through its 2002 College Campaign. Roma women in Macedonia vowed to reverse ancient and heinous marriage practices that abuse women, girls were saved from female genital mutilation and allowed to be educated in Kenya, San Francisco was pronounced a Rape Free Zone by the City Council, Harlem was declared Vagina Friendly by the State Senator.

V-Day itself stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, V-Day Safe House (Narok, Kenya is operational; house in Kabul, Afghanistan and Pine Ridge Reservaton, South Dakota, U.S.. are in the planning stages), The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2003, V-Day projects over 2003 V-Day benefit events will be staged during February-March 2003 to raise funds for local groups and awareness about the rampant issues of violence against women and girls throughout the world.

#### **About V-Day**

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery.

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Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities.

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The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities" in 2001. In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan Celia Swan, [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY ANNOUNCES 'INDIAN COUNTRY PROJECT'**  
**TO RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS AROUND**  
**RAMPANT VIOLENCE FACING NATIVE AMERICAN AND FIRST NATIONS WOMEN:**

**NATIVE ACTIVIST SUZANNE BLUE STAR BOY APPOINTED**  
**DIRECTOR OF THE V-DAY 'INDIAN COUNTRY PROJECT'**

*'Kitchen Cabinet'- formed by Blue Star Boy - will consist of prominent Native activists including Tantoo Cardinal, Tillie Black Bear, Peggy Bird, Sara Deer, and Eileen Hudon*

October 10, 2002, V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, formally announced today the launch of its **Indian Country Project** and the appointment of Native American activist Suzanne Blue Star Boy as Director of the Project. V-Day has developed the Indian Country Project to prioritize raising consciousness, awareness and money around the issues facing Native American women in the United States and First Nations women in Canada at a time when violence against women and girls in Indian Country is at epidemic proportions. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the rate of incidence (of rape or sexual assault) is 3.5 times higher than any other race in the United States. The rate\* continues to rise while Indian women and girls remain invisible as an at risk population.

The project will also build coalitions to strengthen tribal commitments to end violence, beginning with the work of the newly formed 'Kitchen Cabinet, ' and V-Day will bring the issues facing native women in front of the world February - March 2003 via the hundreds of V-Day 2003 benefit events that are being staged worldwide.

On the announcement, V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Eve Ensler stated,"V-Day Rapid City 2002 was a devastating and inspirational experience in that we witnessed first hand the disturbing amount of violence in Indian country and the fierce determination and courage of the Native and First Nations women. 3.5 times as many women are violated on Indian reservations than anywhere else in North America. It is an outrage and a shame to see this kind of violence, poverty and isolation and it is all of our responsibility to heal this terrible wound. V-Day has decided to spotlight Native women this year and we are proud to announce that Suzanne Blue Star Boy has joined us to lead the Indian Country Project."

As Director of the V-Day Indian Country Project, the Washington, DC-based Ms. Blue Star Boy will travel across Indian Country to educate Native American and First Nations women about V-Day as a means to fundraise for local anti-violence groups and programs. On her appointment, she commented, "V-Day offers Indian Country a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the rampant problem of violence against Native women and girls and to spark sustainable, community-sponsored events. V-Day's successes offer a model with strong promise for Native American and First Nations women."

In addition, V-Day itself will educate about the specific issues of violence against Native American and First Nations women as part of its upcoming, worldwide V-Day 2003 campaigns and V-Day benefits (scheduled to take place February - March 2003). A central component of this education will be the expansion of the "Afghanistan Is Everywhere" program, which when launched in 2002, focused on Afghan women with the broader intention to unite women worldwide by pointing out the similarities between the experiences of the women of Afghanistan and those of women and girls in other areas of the world. In 2002, the world witnessed the violent oppression in which Afghan Women lived. V-Day sponsored the Spotlight on Afghan Women to raise funds for Afghan Women working for change within their country. At the same time, V-Day declared, Afghanistan is Everywhere. In 2003, V-Day

will launch '**Afghanistan Is Everywhere: A Spotlight On Native American and First Nations Women.**' This program will bring the issues facing native women to local V-Day events around the world, asking all people to stand with Native American women in their struggle to be free of violence. The program will also encourage event organizers to contribute 10% of their benefit proceeds to support work ending violence in Native American, Native Alaskan, and First Nations communities.

Immediately upon assuming her new role, Ms. Blue Star Boy implemented a '**Kitchen Cabinet**', a non-traditional advisory board for the 'V-Day Indian Country Project' comprised of Tantoo Cardinal (the Native American actress who has appeared in critically acclaimed films including "Dances With Wolves" and "Smoke Signals," among many others), Tillie Black Bear (a founding member of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Black Bear also helped form the South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Award); Peggy Bird (currently a private consultant working with Clan Star, Inc., the technical assistance provider for the tribal coalitions, and former Director of DNA's Native American Family Violence Prevention Project); Sarah Deer (Staff Attorney for the Tribal Law & Policy Institute in West Hollywood, California, also worked for DOJ for several years as the Director of the STOP GRANTS and VAWA money with the tribes); Eileen Hudon (currently working in Minnesota on domestic violence and sexual assault issues, Hudon was formerly the director of Songidee Biimadaziwin, a sexual assault program at the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center in Minneapolis).

#### About V-Day

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery. V-Day provides funding to create and nurture innovative programs to stop the violence.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities.

V-Day itself stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2002, more than 800 V-Day benefit events were presented by local volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities" in 2001. In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone.

#### **The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.**

###

\* According to the "American Indians and Crime" report (US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, February 1999) for the period 1992-1996:

American Indians were the victims of rape or sexual assault at 3.5 times the rate of United States residents of other races.

About 90% of the American Indian victims of rape or sexual assault reported an offender of a different race.

Nearly a third of all American Indian victims of violence were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Some Native Americans, service providers and national researchers believe that, even though statistics reflect an alarming rate of sexual violence in Indian Country, the rate of sexual assault in particular is underrepresented, most likely due to being underreported. The history of cultural and personal oppression of Native American and First Nations women, their fear of familial reprisal and shame, and the overlapping and confusing federal, state and tribal legal jurisdictions that can hinder investigations and prosecutions, discourage Native American women victims of violence from pursuing support and justice and leaves them feeling helpless and fearful.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan

**V-DAY ANNOUNCES V-WORLD SUMMIT,  
THE FIRST EVER INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF V-DAY ACTIVISTS TO TAKE PLACE IN  
ROME, FRIDAY-SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20-21:**

**SUMMIT WILL STRATEGIZE ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FACILITATED BY  
FOUNDER/PLAYWRIGHT EVE ENSLER:**

**ACADEMY AWARD WINNING ACTRESS AND ACTIVIST JANE FONDA  
AND LIFETIME PRESIDENT & CEO CAROLE BLACK TO ATTEND**

September 6, 2002 - V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, will hold its first V-World Summit in Rome, Friday-Saturday, September 20-21, it was announced today. At the Summit, more than 25 international V-Day activists, women who have brought a V-Day event, or the V-Day movement, into their cities, communities, countries and cultures, will convene and construct the vision necessary to end violence against women and girls.

**NOTE: A press conference is scheduled for the opening of the V-World Summit on Friday, September 20 at 11:00AM. Museo D'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Via Reggio Emilia 54, Alle Ore 11. At the press conference, V-Day Founder/Artistic Director Playwright Eve Ensler, V-Counsel member Jane Fonda and the attending activists will unveil V-Day's 2003 vision statement which asks women and men around the world to envision a world without violence and let V-Day become V-World.**

V-Day activists from countries including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Democratic Republic Of Congo, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Italy, Kenya, Macedonia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States will strategize through facilitation by V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler, to make a V-World, a world in which women and girls truly do live without violence. As part of the summit agenda, the activists will discuss their successes to date within their communities, how they can make V-World a part of their 2003 activities, and, more broadly, strategize a 3-year plan to make real movement in ending violence.

Esteemed members of V-Day's newly formed advisory group - known as the V-Counsel - including Academy Award winning actress and activist Jane Fonda and President & CEO Lifetime Entertainment Services Carole Black are scheduled to attend and participate.

The V-Day activists scheduled to attend are: Agnes Pareyio - Narok, Kenya; Winfridah Anyango - Eldoret, Kenya; Janet Kiarie - Nairobi, Kenya; Mary Morten - Chicago, IL, USA; Noelle Colome - San Francisco, CA, USA; Angelina Corbet - Charlotte, NC, USA; Rada Boric - Skopje, Macedonia and Zagreb, Croatia; Nuna Zvizdic - Sarajevo, Bosnia; Mariana Katarova - Bulgaria; Kevsera Memedova - Skopje, Macedonia; Irene Martine Ndaya Nabote - Lumbabashi, Dem Rep of Congo; Lynne Mausebaum - Johannesburg, South Africa; Claude Boucher - Paris, France; Marie Cécile Renauld - Paris, France; Tamsin Larby - London, England; Nicoletti Billi - Rome, Italy; Monica Capuani - Rome, Italy; Karin Heisecke - Germany; Monique Wilson - Manila, Philippines; Rossana Abueva - Manila, Philippines; Shabnam Hashmi - Delhi, India; Esther Chavez - Juarez, Mexico; Marsha Lopez - Guatemala City, Guatemala; Zoya - Afghanistan

### **About V-Day**

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Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. V-Day itself stages large-scale benefits and promotes innovative gatherings and programs (The Afghan Women's Summit, The Stop Rape Contest, Indian Country Project, and more) to change social attitudes towards violence against women. In 2002, more than 800 V-Day benefit events were presented by local volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities" in 2001. In its first five years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$14 million, with over \$7 million raised in 2002 alone.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Susan Celia Swan, [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY NAMES JERRI LYNN FIELDS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

August 8, 2002 - New York, NY - Jerri Lynn Fields has been named the Executive Director of V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls, it was announced today by V-Day Artistic Director and Founder Eve Ensler.

"We are thrilled to have Jerri Lynn Fields as our new Executive Director. Her spirit, her capacity to organize and manage, and her great heart will guide us as we continue to expand as a global movement," stated Ensler on making the announcement.

On her appointment, Ms. Fields commented, "To make the move from being one of the very front line anti-violence groups that V-Day supports to working with Eve and the V-Day staff who lead the charge is both challenging and a dream come true. V-Day celebrates the strength of women while providing support and it is a pleasure to join this groundbreaking movement with both the vision and the mission to effectively raise awareness and funds in the fight to end violence against women."

In her new role which she assumed in April, Fields will oversee the day to day operations of the V-Day movement including supervising the core staff of directors, financial management, and the growing calendar of events and programmatic work around the world, all part of the V-Day mission to raise awareness and funds to stop violence against women and girls.

Fields came to V-Day in 2001 as the Development and Communications director after serving in the same role with the Fund for the City of New York. Her career in women's and human services began immediately after obtaining a master's degree in College Student Personnel Administration, when she began working in human services at Horizons Community Services in Chicago, the largest gay and lesbian social service agency in the Midwest, where she served as Director of Youth Services, Anti-Violence Project Director and Director of Programs. She then led Rape Victim Advocates in Chicago as executive director for three years.

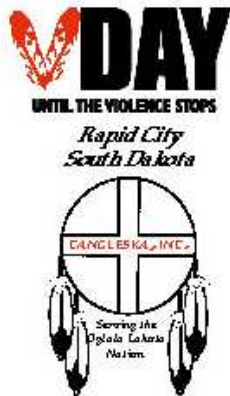
She was the president of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and served on the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Illinois. She has served on the board of Equality Illinois and the Center for Anti-Violence Education in Brooklyn, NY and is currently on the Leadership Committee of Rape Victim Advocates and the Advisory Council of RAINN, the National Sexual Assault Hotline.

Fields replaces previous Executive Director Willa Shalit, who served in that role since 1998 and was one of the original group of women who founded V-Day with Ensler in late 1997.

**About V-Day:** V-Day is a global movement that helps anti-violence organizations throughout the world continue and expand their core work on the ground, while drawing public attention to the larger fight to stop worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual slavery) against women and girls. V-Day is also a day (on or around Valentine's Day in February), for which annual theatrical and artistic events are produced around the world to transform consciousness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. Each year, V-Day promotes a series of innovative productions, events and initiatives that are identified collectively as V-Day and the year (i.e. V-Day 2001, V-Day 2002, V-Day 2003S). In 2002, V-Day evolved from one day - Valentine's Day - into a 13-week calendar of events and social action campaigns. From January 24 - April 20, 2002, more than 800 benefit productions of Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues," took place in theatres, community centers, houses of worship, and college campuses around the world.

The movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In its first four years, V-Day raised more than \$7 million and was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In 2002, the V-Day movement raised nearly \$7 million.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine, and Vagina.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SUSAN SWAN 212-253-1823 [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY RAPID CITY 2002 EVENT RAISES FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS  
TOWARDS BUILDING OF NEW CANGLESKA SHELTER:**

*As a result of the event, V-Day announces Indian country initiative to raise awareness and money around the issues facing Native women in the U.S.*

August 1, 2002, Rapid City, SD - V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, announced today the fundraising results of the V-Day Rapid City 2002 benefit for Cangleska, Inc., a private, nonprofit tribally chartered organization, which provides domestic violence and sexual assault services to the people of the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Proceeds from the successful V-Day Rapid City 2002 event "*On Sacred Ground...A Safe Place*" raised \$40,000 via ticket sales and Jane Fonda, who participated in the evening, has donated \$10,000. The total of \$50,000 will go towards the building of a new shelter. V-Day is continuing to work with Cangleska to raise funds for the shelter.

As a result of the event, and its work with Cangleska, V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, has prioritized raising consciousness, awareness and money around the issues facing Native women in this country and has launched the Indian Country Initiative. Native activist Suzanne Blue Star Boy, who leads the initiative, will travel across Indian Country to educate Native women about V-Day as a means to fundraise for local anti-violence programs. In addition, V-Day will seek to educate about the issues of violence against Native women in its upcoming V-Day 2003 campaigns and benefits (scheduled to take place during February – April 2003).

V-Day Rapid City 2002 featured the Rapid City premiere of V-Day Artistic Director and Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler's performing her world-renowned play "*The Vagina Monologues*," with special guests Jane Fonda, Tantoo Cardinal, and musical guests ULALI. Jenny Ghost Bear opened the event at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center with a Lakota Four Directions song. Marlin Mousseau, George Twiss, and Karen Artichoker, Management Team Directors for Cangleska, Inc. thanked V-Day and the Rapid City community for its support and concern for Oglala women and children.

In Indian country, the rate of violence against women is the highest in the nation. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indians is 3.5 times higher than for all other races.

**About Cangleska, Inc.:**

Cangleska, Inc. (pronounced Chung Gle Shka) is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) and tribally chartered organization, serving the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in Kyle, South Dakota. Cangleska's purpose is to provide domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and intervention services to the people of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Cangleska, Inc. is nationally recognized as the leader in Indian Country in response to domestic violence and sexual assault. Their shelter and outreach advocates provide services to over 800 women per year and thousands

of children. The Oglala Lakota Tribe is in a state of emergency regarding the violence within the family and the present facility used as a shelter for women who are battered and their children is inadequate to meet the need.

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[www.equalitynow.org](http://www.equalitynow.org)

**V**DAY  
UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS



[www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Susan Celia Swan, V-Day  
[press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

### **VAGINAS ARE VICTORIOUS IN LUBUMBASHI COURT**

#### **RIGHT TO PRODUCE T WITH HELP FROM EQUALITY NOW, CONGOLESE WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUP WINS THE HE VAGINA MONOLOGUES FOR V-DAY IN LUBUMBASHI**

**NEW YORK, July 19, 2002:** Yesterday was a day of victory for **Irene Martine, Director of the Center of Hope for Girls and Women (CEFF)**—an NGO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), working to end violence against women and to promote the rights of women and girls in the DRC.

Stopped by local authorities from staging a V-Day benefit production of “The Vagina Monologues” in April, Ms. Martine was arrested at the instigation of the Mayor of Lubumbashi and charged with: (i) insubordination; (ii) pornography and the incitement of minors to debauchery; (iii) incitement of girls and women to rebellion; and (iv) importation of Western ideas.

She was detained for two weeks. Women and girls who came to demonstrate on her behalf were themselves arrested as they were singing songs of protest and also detained.

**Equality Now** was alerted by **V-Day** to the plight of Ms. Martine, and through its LAW (Lawyers Alliance for Women) Project—an initiative to promote equality for women through law—encouraged Ms. Martine to challenge the charges against her. The LAW Project also secured funding to enable Ms. Martine to hire a lawyer, who convinced the court to summon the Mayor to explain his actions.

At a hearing on July 10<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Martine’s lawyer cross-examined the Mayor, disputing each of the charges as either unsubstantiated or not criminal in nature. He pointed out, for example, that the Mayor himself was wearing a suit that was “100% importation of western mentalities.”

Several thousand women and girls reportedly came to court to support Ms. Martine, and the crowd in the courthouse booed the Mayor of Lubumbashi when he allegedly stated that Ms. Martine’s attempt to perform the Vagina Monologues was an attempt “to destroy culture and families.”

The court found in favor of Ms. Martine, and imposed a heavy fine or 6 months imprisonment on the Mayor, who apologized, reportedly stating, “I am not only apologizing to Madam Irene, her team and to the court, but my apology goes to all Congolese women and to all women on this earth.”

Equality Now and V-Day welcome the ruling, which is a great success for Ms. Martine, CEFF, V-Day and all women and girls in the DRC.

*Equality Now is an international human rights organization working to protect women's rights.*

*V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls.*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Susan Celia Swan for V-Day [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY SAFE HOUSE TO OPEN IN NAROK, KENYA FOR GIRLS  
ESCAPING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MARRIAGES:**

**LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP TASARU NTOMOMOK TO RUN THE SAFE HOUSE WHICH WILL  
OPEN ON MONDAY, APRIL 8:**

***V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler to attend at the Grand Opening***

April 5, 2002- New York and Narok, Kenya - V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, today announced the opening of the first V-Day Safe House in Narok, Kenya on Monday, April 8. The Narok Safe House will have 40 beds and is intended as a safe haven for young girls seeking refuge from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early childhood marriage. Noted Kenyan activist and V-Day beneficiary Agnes Pareyio, one of the founders of Tasuru Ntomomok will oversee the V-Day Safe house there.

Tasuru Ntomomok is a community-based, non-profit organization that educates the community on the dangers of FGM and early childhood marriages and also provides an alternative to the ritual of FGM. When she began her work 2 1/2 years ago, Pareyio would walk from village to village with a replica of the female genitalia both cut and uncut in order to illustrate the effects of FGM on the young women. As a result of the group's awareness campaign, girls started saying "No" to FGM and turning to the group for refuge.

On the group's work and Pareyio, V-Day Founder/Playwright Eve Ensler stated, "Two years ago, I met Agnes Pareyio in the field educating a group on the dangers of FGM. By simply educating girls and their relatives, both male and female, she was enacting revolutionary change, she was saving girls from the cut."

Immediately following that visit, V-Day purchased a Jeep for Agnes so she could cover more territory and reach more people and also began fundraising for the first V-Day safe house where girls could seek refuge. The importance of the Safe house lies in the fact that once educated about the cut, girls require a safe place to seek refuge. Without a safe haven, many of the girls will be forced to undergo FGM.

Pareyio stated, "Eve and V-DAY started by donating a jeep that has enabled me to reach my people - the Maasai - who are deeply rooted by their traditional cultures and who still hold their beliefs that girls can not be a woman without the cut. With the opening of the Safe House, girls who have escaped the cut can undergo an alternative ritual which I hope my people will grow to understand and adopt."

For the alternative rite of passage without the cut, Tasaru Ntomomok takes girls into a 5-day seclusion during which they teach them to know themselves and empower them to make informed decisions about their own lives. This education intentionally reflects the Masai culture, where women start teaching their girls immediately after forced FGM when they are still in seclusion. Tasaru Ntomomok believes the teachings are important and should continue, but without the pain of the cut.

To date, the organization has been able to rescue many girls who are staying with well-wishers until the V-Day Safe House opens. V-DAY has also facilitated 2 seminars where 150 girls graduated without the cut. On Monday in Narok, 40 more girls will graduate with Ensler handing out their certificates.

The V-Day Safe House in Narok is the first V-Day Safe House to open. On April 20 in Rapid City, SD, USA, V-Day will hold a fundraising event for the second V-Day Safe House which will be built Native Sioux Land to serve Native American women.

#### **About V-Day**

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#### **V-Day 2002 sponsors and marketing partners:**

To date, V-Day's 2002 corporate sponsors include Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Lifetime Television, Liz Claiborne, Marie Claire, and Tampax. V-Day's 2002 marketing partners include Eziba (V-Day's exclusive retailer: <http://www.eziba.com/vday>), Karen Neuburger (V-Day pajamas), SUNDĀRI, and Vosges Haut-Chocolat.

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###



**MEDIA ALERT**

Contact: Susan Celia Swan for V-Day [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org)

**V-DAY AND EQUALITY NOW IN AFGHANISTAN FOR GROUND-BREAKING ROUNDTABLE TALKS:**

**V-DAY EXPANDS ITS FOCUS ON WOMEN AND WAR AS SPONSOR OF KABUL TALKS AND SPONSOR OF NYC SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF "NECESSARY TARGETS" FOR THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

*Founder/playwright Eve Ensler, Equality Now Founder/President Jessica Neuwirth, Afghan Women's Organization Founder/Director Adeena Niazi, and V-Day Special Representative Hibaaq Osman join 30 grassroots Afghan women leaders on March 9-10 in Kabul*

March 7, 2002 – Eve Ensler (V-Day Founder/Playwright), Jessica Neuwirth (Founder/President, Equality Now), Addena Niaza (Afghan Women's Organization), and Hibaaq Osman (V-Day) are holding their first meetings in Kabul with Afghan women leaders since the defeat of the Taliban to discuss historic next steps for Afghan women. More than 30 prominent Afghan women leaders have traveled against all odds from Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, and other regions for the roundtable discussions scheduled to take place in March 9-10. A follow up to the Afghan Women's Summit For Democracy (held in Brussels in December), the Kabul talks will focus on their current conditions, women's rights progress, and strategies for reconstruction. Talks will coincide with International Women's Day (March 8).

For Ensler, who traveled underground in Afghanistan two years ago, her return to Afghanistan is timely on many levels, "From Kosovo to Kabul, women are often the targets of war but in order for peace to be restored, they must be at the center of the solution. We are focusing on bringing the stories of these women to the world. These stories must be told if we are going to stop this from happening again." In Afghanistan, V-Day has partnered with Broadcast News Network's in-country team, who will provide a broad range of logistical, operational, and editorial support service designed to permit the group to securely meet and to film the talks for future broadcast in the U.S. and around the world.

The Kabul talks coincide with the opening of Ensler's play "Necessary Targets" Off-Broadway in NYC ([www.necessarytargets.com](http://www.necessarytargets.com)). Based on interviews with numerous women who survived the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, "Necessary Targets" provides a timely reminder of the effects of war on women in America and overseas. This Sunday, March 10, the matinee will be a special performance for participants in the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings, followed by a panel discussion "No Women, No Peace: The Urgency of Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325", moderated by Cora Weiss, Hague Appeal for Peace. (Play 3:00-4:30PM, Panel Discussion 4:30-5:30PM, General public is welcome, for reservations contact Judy Corcoran (212) 315-2449).

While in Kabul, Ensler will also deliver the much-needed first phase in the development of a working telecommunications infrastructure for the Afghan women leaders with the delivery of state of the art satellite phone systems outfitted with solar chargers and free airtime. At this time, there is no traditional phone service in Afghanistan and satellite phones remain both scarce and expensive. This infrastructure will allow Afghan women in all regions of the country to communicate with each other, and with their advocates in the west.

Sponsored by V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls and a long-time advocate for Afghan women, the immediate goal for the talks are fourfold: (1) To provide a forum for Afghan women leaders

from all regions and ethnic groups to discuss the issues facing their country; (2) To aid in making the Brussels Proclamation a living document for Afghan women; (3) To assess immediate needs to determine V-Day funding efforts for Afghan women; (4) To bring the message of Afghan women back to women in the west, and around the world, through the "Afghanistan is Everywhere" campaign and the video documenting the Kabul roundtable discussions.

The Kabul talks will address progress towards enacting the Brussels Proclamation, the blueprint that outlines in detail the Afghan Women's Summit's comprehensive vision for the future and their immediate, and still pending, reconstruction needs. The document carried the message that significant portions of any international aid should go to projects benefiting women, as well as a full restoration of women's rights as citizens and the participation of women in drafting new laws and a future constitution and addresses four central components of Afghan society: education and culture, healthcare, refugees and human rights. The full text of the Brussels Proclamation can be found at [www.vday.org/afghanistan](http://www.vday.org/afghanistan). Following the daily talks from 8:00AM-5:00PM, the evening sessions include traditional dinner, dancing, entertainment and art programs.

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#### **About The Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy:**

The Afghan Women's Summit was a two-day global gathering of Afghan women held in Brussels December 4-5, 2001. Over 40 grassroots Afghan women leaders, broadly representative of women in Afghanistan, took part in the Summit and issued the Brussels Proclamation. The goal of the Summit was to bring the voices of the Afghan women into the current international political discourse, ensuring that their message is heard and that women have equal say and rights in the new government. Following the Summit, a delegation of six Afghan women from the meeting carried their message to key political decision-makers around the world, including the United Nations, Congress, the State Department, European Parliament, and key media and cultural leaders. The Afghan Women's Summit was organized by women's rights organizations from around the world - European Women's Lobby, Equality Now, V-Day, the Center for Strategic Initiatives of Women, and The Feminist Majority, in collaboration with the Gender Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and UNIFEM.

#### **About V-Day:**

V-Day is a global movement that helps anti-violence organizations throughout the world continue and expand their core work on the ground, while drawing public attention to the larger fight to stop worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual slavery) against women and girls. The concept for V-Day was borne out of two of V-Day Founder Eve Ensler's plays: "Necessary Targets" and "The Vagina Monologues." V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In just five years, V-Day has raised over \$7 million and was recently named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities". <http://www.vday.org>

#### **About Equality Now:**

Equality Now is an international human rights organization working to end violence and discrimination against women. Issues of concern include rape, domestic violence, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation, denial of reproductive rights, equal access to education and employment, and political participation of women. Through its Women's Action Network, which has 25,000 members in more than one hundred countries around the world, Equality Now highlights human rights violations against women and girls and mobilizes public pressure to stop them. <http://www.equalitynow.org>

#### ***About "Necessary Targets":***

"Necessary Targets," the new play by Eve Ensler, is directed by Michael Wilson and stars Tony and Emmy Award-winner and two-time Oscar nominee Shirley Knight and film and stage star Diane Venora. In "Necessary Targets," two American women, a Park Avenue psychiatrist and an ambitious young writer, travel to Bosnia to help women refugees confront their memories of war. Based on interviews conducted by Eve Ensler with numerous women who survived the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, "Necessary Targets," is a timely reminder of how America struggles to define its relationship to the rest of the world. At the Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Avenue at 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC. <http://www.necessarytargets.com>

***About BNN:***

Since 1983, BNN, the largest independent producer of news and documentary has been at the forefront of both production and innovation. The company has produced hundreds of hours of news documentary programming for clients that include A&E, CNN, CBS, CourtTV, NBC, RTL and the BBC. Most recently, the company produced the first ever High Definition TV reports from a war zone, with Chief Correspondent Peter Arnett and a series of programs that took an extraordinary look at the destruction of the World Trade Center -- 24 Hours at Ground Zero for MSNBC and Voices from Ground Zero for TLC. Visit the company online at <http://www.bnntv.com>.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Susan Celia Swan for V-Day [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org).

**V-DAY ANNOUNCES ITS 2002 BENEFIT SHOW IN NYC –**  
**V-DAY HARLEM 2002 – PRESENTED BY ESSENCE,**  
**PRODUCED BY ACTORS LISAGAY HAMILTON AND ROSIE PEREZ**  
**AT THE WORLD FAMOUS APOLLO THEATRE,**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 30:**

**BENEFIT PROCEEDS TO GO TO COMMUNITY GROUPS DEDICATED TO STOPPING VIOLENCE**  
**AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS:**

**CAST TO INCLUDE:**

**ROSIE PEREZ, LISAGAY HAMILTON, SALMA HAYEK, HIP-HOP ARTIST EVE, NAOMI CAMPBELL,**  
**ROSARIO DAWSON, DENYCE GRAVES, LYNN WHITFIELD, HAZELLE GOODMAN,**  
**SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, V-DAY FOUNDER/PLAYWRIGHT EVE ENSLER,**  
**AMONG OTHERS**

*Tickets are on sale now at Ticketmaster; In association with HBO, CR Enterprises, Inc., and People En Español*

February 28, 2002 - New York, NY – V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, today announced its 2002 benefit show in NYC - V-Day Harlem 2002, presented by ESSENCE, in association with HBO, CR Enterprises, Inc. and People En Español, at the world famous Apollo Theatre on Saturday, March 30 at 7:00PM. V-Day Harlem 2002 is the passion of actors LisaGay Hamilton and Rosie Perez, who have both performed in V-Day benefits, including last year's sold-out V-Day 2001 event at Madison Square Garden, as well as in commercial productions of "The Vagina Monologues" throughout the country.

Produced by Hamilton and Perez, V-Day Harlem 2002 will feature a performance of V-Day Artistic Director and Founder Eve Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues," music, and dance by a diverse cast including: LisaGay Hamilton, Rosie Perez, Eve, Salma Hayek, Naomi Campbell, Mary Alice, Dr. Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Starla Benford, Kim Crenshaw, Rosario Dawson, Eve Ensler, Takayo Fischer, Free (BET's 106 & Park), Hazelle Goodman, Denyce Graves, Amy Hill, Madhur Jaffey, Sakina Jaffey, Miss Jones, LaChanze, Amel Larrieux, Lisa Liguillo, Mariposa, Angie Martinez, S. Epatha Merkerson, Hibaaq Osman, Tonya Pinkins, Carolyna Skywalker, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Eddie Torres Latin Dancers, Tamara Tunie, Lauren Velez, Kerry Washington, Lynn Whitfield, and more...

Proceeds from V-Day Harlem 2002 will benefit the African American Task Force on Violence Against Women In Central Harlem; The Dominican Women's Development Center, the Violence Intervention Program; and Sakhi; all are community-based organizations dedicated to stopping violence against women.

On the announcement, LisaGay Hamilton and Rosie Perez stated, "After witnessing the effect of V-Day 2001 last year at Madison Square Garden, we were compelled to bring V-Day to Harlem. We invite everyone in the community to join us at V-Day Harlem, to come together to stop violence against women and girls."

Eve Ensler, V-Day Artistic Director/Founder and Playwright, noted, "V-Day's mission is to end violence against women and girls by raising awareness and funds. This year, over 800 V-Day benefits will do just that in cities from Cebu City,

Philippines, to South Central, LA, from Paris, France to Juarez, Mexico. It is so very exciting to see V-Day come to Harlem in 2002 and we thank the community for its support.”

Dr. Camille O. Cosby and Susan L. Taylor of Essence Communications Partners are Honorary Chairs of V-Day Harlem 2002.

"ESSENCE magazine has a proud history of tackling the tough social issues confronting Black women," says Susan L. Taylor, ESSENCE editorial director and V-Day Harlem honorary chairwoman. "V-Day Harlem is a powerful event we are presenting to focus our community on ending violence against women and girls."

Ticket prices are \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500 and \$1000.

\*\*\$250. tickets are available now at Ticketmaster - #(877) 870-4929 and <http://www.ticketmaster.com> and the Apollo Box Office at 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, (212) 531-5305.

\*\*\$500 and \$1000 tickets are available via phone (212) 252-3136.

For additional information, visit: <http://www.essence.com/vdayharlem> and <http://www.vday.org>

In 2002, V-Day has evolved from one day - Valentine's Day – into a 13-week calendar of events and social action campaigns. From January 24 – April 20, 2002, more than 800 benefit productions of Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues," are taking place in theatres, community centers, houses of worship, and college campuses around the world.

Throughout the world, V-Day benefits are shaped by their organizers and the local community. V-Day events range from 5000-seat theatrical productions featuring local stars, actresses and activists to 100 person 'rallies' in the town square. All V-Day benefits feature a performance of "The Vagina Monologues." All donate their proceeds to local organizations that work to stop violence against women and girls.

#### **About V-Day**

V-Day is a global movement that helps anti-violence organizations throughout the world continue and expand their core work on the ground, while drawing public attention to the larger fight to stop worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual slavery) against women and girls.

V-Day is also a day (on or around Valentine's Day in February), for which annual theatrical and artistic events are produced around the world to transform consciousness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. Each year, V-Day promotes a series of innovative productions, events and initiatives that are identified collectively as V-Day and the year (i.e. V-Day 2001, V-Day 2002, V-Day 2003...).

V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots national, and international organizations and programs that work to stop violence against women and girls. In just five years, V-Day has raised over \$7 million and was recently named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities".

#### **About ESSENCE:**

With more than 8 million readers, ESSENCE is the preeminent magazine for Black women. Published by Essence Communications Partners, it is the leading source of cutting-edge information relating to every area of African-American women's lives. For 31 years, ESSENCE has celebrated personal achievement, chronicled social movement, documented struggles, showcased beauty, defined and set trends, and illustrated the incredible journey of a resilient and splendid race. Additional information about ESSENCE is available at <http://www.essence.com>. Media contact: Rhonda Evans, ESSENCE, (212) 642-0676, [revans@essence.com](mailto:revans@essence.com)

#### **V-Day 2002 sponsors and marketing partners:**

To date, V-Day's 2002 corporate sponsors include Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Lifetime Television, Liz Claiborne, Marie Claire, and Tampax. V-Day's 2002 marketing partners include Eziba (V-Day's exclusive retailer:

<http://www.eziba.com/vday>), Karen Neuburger (V-Day pajamas), SUNDARI, and Vosges Haut-Chocolat.

**The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine, and Vagina.**

###

#### **About the V-Day Harlem 2002 Beneficiaries:**

**African-American Task Force On Violence Against Women In Central Harlem:** The Task Force is dedicated to eradicating violence against women in Harlem by bringing together all of the stakeholders in the community to develop a comprehensive community response. The Task Force believes that all segments of the community are touched by the violence inflicted upon women. To increase the community stakeholders, their work is implemented through strategies of advocacy, outreach, education, and technical support to community organizations, all of which are designed to address the problem of violence against women.

**The Dominican Women's Development Center:**

The Dominican Women's Development Center supports "Nuevo Amancer" a domestic violence program which includes counseling, advocacy, a 24 hour hotline, crisis intervention, support group & law enforcement personnel training which addresses the particular needs of battered Latina women.

**Sakhi:** A community based-organization in the metropolitan area, Sakhi is committed to ending exploitation and violence against women of South Asian origin. When Mohammed Mohsin, a batterer, doused his wife with gasoline and set her on fire in September 1995, Sakhi was there to provide ongoing counseling and support for the survivor who spoke little English.

**Violence Intervention Program (VIP):** Located in East Harlem, VIP provides a dozen Latina and African-American families with safe dwellings in non-disclosed apartments after severe and violent encounters with spouses and boyfriends. VIP is providing technical assistance to the prosecution in the case of a prominent Latino activist who is charged with the brutal murder of his ex-girlfriend, Gladys Ricota, as she stood on her lawn on her wedding day. Through these efforts, along with counseling and advocacy, VIP has raised awareness and encouraged more women to seek help before it is too late



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**V-DAY,**  
**THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO STOP VIOLENCE**  
**AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS,**  
**LAUNCHES ITS V-DAY 2002 BENEFIT SEASON IN WASHINGTON, DC AT THE FIRST-EVER “V-**  
**DAY DC” ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 24:**

**V-DAY DC FEATURES PLAYWRIGHT AND V-DAY FOUNDER EVE ENSLER PERFORMING HER**  
**PLAY “THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES” AND JOINED BY**  
**VERY SPECIAL GUESTS AT THE NATIONAL THEATER**

*V-Day 2002 benefit events scheduled to take place from January 24 – late April include V-Day San Francisco, V-Day Harlem, and a V-Day Fundraising evening in NYC*

January 11, 2002 -- V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women and girls, today announced the first of the V-Day 2002 benefit events, V-Day DC. On January 24, award-winning playwright and V-Day Artistic Director and Founder Eve Ensler will give a rare solo performance of her critically acclaimed Off-Broadway play “The Vagina Monologues” at the National Theater. V-Day DC will benefit groups that work locally and internationally to end violence against women and girls, as well as groups that are working with Afghan women: Ayuda, DC Rape Crisis Center, Empower, House of Ruth, My Sister’s Place, Tahirih Justice Center, WEAVE, International Medical Corps, and Vital Voices Afghan Women’s Project. Some very special guests – to be announced - will join Ensler to perform some of the more recently written vagina monologues including “Under The Burqa” about women in Afghanistan and “My Short Skirt.”

On announcing V-Day DC, Ensler said, “It is no coincidence that V-Day 2002 will begin in Washington, DC, our nation’s seat of power. There has been a paradigm shift in our national consciousness, a heightened awareness of the leadership capabilities of women, and women throughout the world and in this country are now, finally, coming into positions of power where they will effectively solve some of our most pressing problems—like violence against women and girls.”

Immediately following the performance, Eve will lead a question and answer discussion session from the stage, accompanied by special guests of the beneficiary organizations on violence against women in Afghanistan as well as representatives who will discuss V-Day’s Congressional initiative with Lifetime Television to support legislation to stop violence against women and girls internationally.

V-Day DC tickets are available now and may be requested by email ([vday\\_dc@yahoo.com](mailto:vday_dc@yahoo.com)) or by phone (202.737.5942). Performance tickets are \$100 each. Tickets for the performance and reception are \$250; tickets for a pre-performance dinner, performance and reception are \$1000. Co-chairs for the evening’s events are Beth Dozoretz and Pat Mitchell.

\*\*\*For V-Day DC media access and ticket information, contact Bev Lindsey at V-Day DC at [bhlindsey@aol.com](mailto:bhlindsey@aol.com), (202) 737-5877. For interviews with Eve Ensler, contact Susan Celia Swan at V-Day at [press@vday.org](mailto:press@vday.org), (212) 445-3288.\*\*\*

V-Day DC sponsors include: General Motors Corporation, AOL Time Warner, BET Holdings, Inc., Donna McLarty, and Value Options.

Since it began five years ago, V-Day has evolved from one day - Valentine's Day – into a 12-week calendar of events and social action campaigns. From January 24 – April 13, 2002, more than 800 benefit productions of Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues," are confirmed in theatres, community centers, houses of worship, and college campuses around the world. In cities and provinces from Washington, DC to Shanghai, China; Harlem, NY to Nova Scotia, Canada; from Duluth, MN to Cebu City in the Philippines, an international chorus of voices will rise up to entertain and empower, as women realize V-Day's mission to stop violence against women and girls.

For V-Day 2002, dedicated V-Day performers, affectionately known as the "Vulva Choir," will adopt-a-city and appear at many of the local V-Day 2002 events.

- In NYC, Marisa Tomei, Jane Fonda, Isabella Rossellini, Rosie Perez and Ricki Lake are among the actors who will attend the Fundraising evening at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City on Saturday, February 16.
- V-Day Harlem is being organized by actors Lisa Gay Hamilton and Rosie Perez who will also perform. The full cast and details of the event will be announced shortly.
- Gloria Steinem will appear at V-Day South Africa in Johannesburg with local film and TV actresses.
- Rosie Perez will perform at V-Day Puerto Rico.
- Kathy Najimy will return to her hometown to participate in V-Day San Diego.
- Kathleen Chalfant will perform at V-Day Sacramento, V-Day Ojai and V-Day San Francisco.
- V-Day San Francisco will feature Jill Eikenberry, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Amel Larrieux, Rita Moreno, Kathy Najimy, Rosie Perez, California State Senator Jackie Speier, Lily Tomlin, BETTY, Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, author Dorothy Allison, and Kathleen Chalfant, among others.

These are just a few of the stars who are slated to participate in V-Day 2002.

Throughout the world, V-Day benefits are shaped by their organizers and the local community. V-Day events range from 5000-seat theatrical productions featuring local stars, actresses and activists to 100 person 'rallies' in the town square. All V-Day benefits feature a performance of "The Vagina Monologues." All donate their proceeds to local organizations that work to stop violence against women and girls. Following is just a snapshot of a few of the more than 750 local V-Day 2002 events that will take place this year in cities and at colleges around the world:

**V-Day Drew University** (Madison, NJ, USA)

The university's first annual V-Day benefit will be an all-day event at the Baldwin Gym and Forum. Will include workshops and a performance of "The Vagina Monologues" by university actresses followed by the award-winning singing duo, the Indigo Girls. [Thursday, February 28]

**V-Day Klamath Falls** (Eastern Oregon, USA)

Presented as a rally and a reading of "The Vagina Monologues" in the community meeting room of the Klamath County Court House. Performed by local women with art exhibits, the presence of the local women's shelter, photographs of women. The beneficiary, Harbor House Shelter for Battered Women and Children, the local women's shelter which can accommodate about ten families, has been open for one year and maintains almost 100% occupancy. 10% of the proceeds will be donated to the V-Day Zeba Fund for Afghan Women.

**V-Day Gallaudet University** (Washington, DC, USA)

Gallaudet is a deaf university presenting its production in American Sign Language.

**V-Day Romania** (Targu-Mures, Bucharest, Constanta, Sibiu, Timisoara, ROMANIA)

Encompasses 5 local events in the different regions of Romania: V-Day Targu-Mures [February 13-14], V-Day Bucharest [February 16-18], V-Day Constanta [February 23-24], V-Day Sibiu [February 26-28], V-Day Timisoara [February 28 - March 1]. One of three local beneficiaries is the Center of Assistance and Protection for Victims of the Violence. Based in Bucharest, the Center is a governmental organization that provides medical activity, psychological help for victims, telephone lines for psychological and judicial counseling.

**V-Day Middleton** (The Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, CANADA)

Performed in a century old 125-seat Anglican Church by local women with full support of the minister, V-Day Middleton will also feature a day-long trade show in the Church hall with booths for local anti-violence groups, demonstrations, videos, a workshop, V-Day treats, and more. Beneficiaries are two local groups: Chrysallis House, a local regional women's shelter which serves the entire western part of Nova Scotia, and Coverdale, an outreach ministry providing support and specialized services to women victims of violence, young offenders and their parents. [Saturday, February 16]

**V-DAY 2002 NATIONAL EVENTS, CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

V-Day 2002 benefits officially begin in Washington, DC on Thursday, January 24 and run through April 13. These twelve weeks of celebration and social action will encompass the following events, global campaigns, and grassroots initiatives:

**National V-Day events:****V-Day San Francisco**

On Tuesday, February 12, V-Day San Francisco presents a special benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues" directed and performed by Eve Ensler with confirmed guests: Jill Eikenberry, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Ronnie Gilbert, Julia Butterfly Hill, Amel Larrieux, Janice Mirikitani, Rita Moreno, Kathy Najimy, Rosie Perez, California State Senator Jackie Speier, Lily Tomlin, music from BETTY, Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, author Dorothy Allison, Kathleen Chalfant and more at the Masonic Auditorium, 1111 California Street, San Francisco, California.

**An Evening at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City**

A gala, star-studded evening of dinner and performances featuring Jane Fonda, Cynthia Nixon, Glenn Close, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Rosie Perez, Cynthia Garrett, Swoosie Kurtz, Julie Kavner, Marisa Tomei, Isabella Rossellini and Eve Ensler will accompany the announcement of V-Day's 2002 awardees and Stop Rape Contest winners on Saturday, February 16.

**V-Day Harlem, NYC**

LisaGay Hamilton and Rosie Perez are co-producing and will perform at V-Day Harlem in late March. The full cast and details of the event will be announced shortly. "Celebrate, respect and protect the female body" is the mission of V-Day Harlem.

**Groundbreaking ceremony for V-Day Safe House on Sioux Sacred Land**

On April 13, a groundbreaking ceremony and event featuring Ensler performing "The Vagina Monologues" will take place in Rapid City, SD. The safe house is for Sioux women and girls who are suffering from domestic violence on tribal land in South Dakota.

**Broadcast debut of the HBO documentary "The Vagina Monologues"**

HBO's original documentary presents Eve Ensler in a solo performance of "The Vagina Monologues" and captures the intimacy of the play as it was originally conceived and produced Off-Broadway. Featuring interviews with Ensler and real-life female subjects combined with behind-the-scenes footage, the documentary will debut exclusively on HBO on Valentine's Day, Thursday, February 14, 2002 at 9:30PM ET.

**Grassroots and global campaigns:****The V-Day Worldwide Campaign**

Benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” are confirmed to date in more than 200 cities nationally and abroad to raise awareness and money for groups that work to stop violence against women and girls. For the up-to-date listing of cities, go to <http://www.vday.org/world>.

### **The V-Day College Campaign**

Much like the Worldwide Campaign, the College Campaign will bring benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” to more than 550 colleges and universities around the world in an effort to raise awareness and money for local anti-violence groups and empower young people - the leaders and activists of the future. Student organizers oversee the theatrical production from start to finish including casting, location scouting, ticket sales, publicity, and more. For the listing of participating schools to date, go to <http://www.vday.org/college>.

### **V-Day 2002 grassroots initiatives and social action campaigns include:**

**V-Day International Stop Rape Contest** produces innovative and effective strategies to stop rape worldwide - <http://www.vday.org/stoprpe>.

**Speak Up with V-Day and Lifetime Initiative** brings the problem of violence against women in the United States to the attention of our Congressional representatives on March 8 – International Women’s Day - <http://www.vday.org/congress>.

**Rape Free Zone Campaign** encourages people all over the world to mark their communities as “Rape Free Zones” - <http://www.vday.org/rapefreezone>.

**Afghanistan Is Everywhere:** An action and fundraising campaign declaring on International Women’s Day 2002 – March 8 – that “Afghanistan Is Everywhere” to reflect that women around the world are joined in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan and to mobilize a worldwide demand for the implementation of the Brussels Proclamation issued by the Afghan Women’s Summit. Women worldwide identify with and understand the Afghan women’s suffering because the same conditions of violence, oppression, invisibility, and other forms of inequality that plagued Afghanistan are universal.

### **About V-Day**

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### **V-Day 2002 sponsors and marketing partners:**

To date, V-Day’s 2002 corporate sponsors include Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Lifetime Television, Liz Claiborne, Marie Claire, and Tampax.

V-Day’s 2002 marketing partners include Eziba (V-Day’s exclusive retailer: <http://www.eziba.com/vday>), Karen Neuburger (V-Day pajamas), Sundari, and Vosges Haut-Chocolat.

The ‘V’ in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine, and Vagina.

###

**The Vulva Choir (list in formation)**

|                           |                         |                            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Rose Abdo                 | Fran Adams              | Donna Air                  |
| Jessica Alba              | Jane Alderman           | Mary Alice                 |
| Kirstie Alley             | Dorothy Allison         | Maria Conchita Alonso      |
| Rengin Altay              | Christiane Amanpour     | Diane Amos                 |
| Gillian Anderson          | Susan Anton             | Lysette Antony             |
| Mina Anwar                | Anne Archer             | Jann Arden                 |
| Elizabeth Ashley          | Jayne Atkinson          | Mel B                      |
| Hetley May Bailey         | Becky Ann Baker         | Jillian Barberie           |
| Barbara Barrie            | Joy Behar               | Dani Behr                  |
| Glynnis Bell              | Jill Benett             | Starla Benford             |
| Polly Bergen              | Kristie Berger          | Suzanne Bertish            |
| Dr. Bhaswati Bhattacharya | Anjali Bhimani          | Mayim Bialik               |
| Lisa Biello               | Lauren Bishop           | Karen Black                |
| Nina Blackwood            | Rachel Blanchard        | Cate Blanchett             |
| Rosa Blasi                | Lisa Bonet              | Lauren Booth               |
| Wendy Braun               | Erin Brockovich         | Julie Brown                |
| Tania Bryer               | Brett Butler            | Naomi Campbell             |
| Caprice                   | Tantoo Cardinal         | Carolee Carmello           |
| Geneva Carr               | Tia Carrere             | Diahann Carroll            |
| Lisa Nicole Carson        | Nell Carter             | Eliza Carthy               |
| Kathleen Cavendish        | Nicola Cavendish        | Kathleen Chalfant          |
| Melanie Chartoff          | Carlyn Christianson     | Hope Clarke                |
| Ellen Cleghorne           | Kate Clinton            | Glenn Close                |
| Jackie Clune              | Michelle Clunie         | Kathleen Cogan             |
| Laurie Ann Coleman        | Kim Coles               | Didi Conn                  |
| Veanne Cox                | Kim Crenshaw            | Marcia Cross               |
| Lynn Cullen               | Cultural Heritage Choir | Sophie Dahl                |
| Claire Danes              | Joan Darling            | Elyssa Davalos             |
| Lolita Davidovich         | Viola Davis             | Rosario Dawson             |
| Anne E. DeChant           | Lea DeLaria             | Babs DeLay                 |
| Ann Delisi                | Sandra Dickenson        | Ani DiFranco               |
| Anita Dobson              | Elisa Donovan           | Shirley Douglas            |
| Nora Dunn                 | Jenny Éclair            | Eddie Torres Latin Dancers |
| Tracy Edwards             | Jill Eikenberry         | Linda Ellerbee             |
| Tracee Ellis-Ross         | Eve Ensler              | Karen Esquivel             |
| Susie Essman              | Jennifer Estlin         | Melissa Ethridge           |
| Andrea Evans              | Edie Falco              | Kim Farber                 |
| Tovah Feldshuh            | Jean Feraca             | Doris Fields               |
| Kim Fields                | Sally Fingerett         | Takayo Fischer             |
| Calista Flockhart         | Beth Flynn              | Lara Flynn Boyle           |
| Jane Fonda                | Antonia Franceschi      | Bonnie Franklin            |
| Mo Gaffney                | Teri Garr               | Cynthia Garrett            |
| Lannie Garrett            | Ana Gasteyer            | Gina Gershon               |
| Marla Gibbs               | Ronnie Gilbert          | Robin Givens               |
| Sharon Gless              | Judy Gold               | Tracey Gold                |
| Whoopi Goldberg           | Marga Gomez             | Michelle Gomez             |
| Chloe Goodchild           | Hazelle Goodman         | Jilly Goolden              |
| Denyce Graves             | Linda Gray              | Melanie Griffith           |
| Jasmine Guy               | Jeanie Hackett          | Jerry Hall                 |
| Julie Halston             | Lisa Gay Hamilton       | Donna Hanover              |
| Estelle Harris            | Mel Harris              | Jackee Harry               |
| Melissa Joan Hart         | Teri Hatcher            | Salma Hayek                |
| Patricia Hearst           | Katherine Helmond       | Ruthie Henshall            |
| Amy Hill                  | Julia Butterfly Hill    | Dale Hodges                |
| Lorri Holt                | Janet Hubert            | Amy Irving                 |

Judith Ivey  
Carol Jenkins  
Kristin Johnston  
Erica Jong  
Carol Kane  
Sally Kellerman  
Margot Kidder  
Shirley Knight  
Lisa Kreviazuk  
Swoosie Kurtz  
Amy Landecker  
Amel Larrieux  
Queen Latifah  
Vicki Lawrence Schultz  
Kristi Lee  
Lisa Leguillou  
Melissa Leo  
Lisa Ling  
Peggy Lipton  
Mary Lujan  
Maia Madison  
Wendie Malick  
Miriam Margolyes  
Kika Markham  
Marsha Mason  
Marin Mazzie  
Edie McClurg  
Maureen McCormick  
Natasha McElhone  
Elizabeth McGovern  
Marssie Mencotti  
Susan Messing  
Dannii Minogue  
Janice Mirikitani  
Rita Moreno  
Marty Moss-Coane  
Robbie Myrick Villalobos  
Belkys Nerey  
Cynthia Nixon  
Andrea Oliver  
Sherri Parker Lee  
Lori Petty  
Gina Phillips  
Christina Pickles  
Miriam Plotkin  
Rain Pryor  
Cheryl Lee Ralph  
Phylicia Rashad  
Jemma Redgrave  
Hollis Resnik  
Kate Rigg  
Jenn Robertson  
Shiva Rose  
Tracee Ellis Ross  
Mercedes Ruehl  
Susan Sarandon

Madhur Jaffrey  
Teryn Jenkins  
Rhodessa Jones  
Jenny Jules  
Julie Kavner  
Kathy Kelly  
Kimba  
E.L. Konigsburg  
Lisa Kron  
La Chanze  
Diane Lane  
Ali Larter  
Jill Laurens  
Helen Lederer  
Sheryl Lee Ralph  
Tracey Leigh  
Katthey Lette  
Maureen Lipman  
MaryLou Zieve  
Rebecca Luker  
Roma Maffia  
Dinah Manoff  
Juliana Margulies  
Andrea Martin  
Renee Matthews  
Andrea McArdle  
Catherine McCormack  
Audra McDonald  
Penelope McGhie  
Lonette McKee  
Idina Menzel  
Hazel Miller  
Kylie Minogue  
Shazia Mirza  
Alanis Morissette  
Julia Murney  
Kathy Najimy  
Phyllis Newman  
Mary Kate O'Connell  
Oprah  
Prathiba Parmar  
Bijou Phillips  
Mackenzie Phillips  
Rosemund Pike  
Annie Potts  
Kate Puckrick  
Sara Ramirez  
Lisa Ray  
Rondi Reed  
Gloria Reuben  
Alice Ripley  
Michelle Rodriguez  
Jacqueline Roseborough  
Isabella Rossellini  
Barbara Rush  
Julia Sawalha

Sakina Jaffrey  
Amy Johnson Boyle  
Sarah Jones  
Patricia Kalember  
Lainie Kazan  
Leila Kenzle  
Beverley Knight  
Chantal Kreviazuk  
Elvira Kurt  
Ricki Lake  
Jane Lapotarie  
Sanaa Lathan  
Josie Lawrence  
Joie Lee  
Kimora Lee Simmons  
Tsidii LeLoka  
Jenifer Lewis  
Rebecca Lipson  
Amy Love  
Ali MacGraw  
Ann Magnuson  
Sonia Manzano  
Mariposa  
Angie Martinez  
Debi Mazar  
Rue McClanahan  
Mary McCormack  
Mary McDonnell  
Kelly McGillis  
S. Epatha Merkerson  
Hayley Mills  
Soraya Mire  
Erin Moran  
Amy Morton  
Brittany Murphy  
Olivia Negrón  
Thandie Newton  
Sandra Oh  
Joan Osborne  
Rosie Perez  
Christina Phillips  
Michelle Phillips  
Tonya Pinkins  
Stefanie Powers  
Charlotte Rae  
Helen Raptis  
Rayel  
Jennifer Eplett Reilly  
Jolie Richardson  
Doris Roberts  
Peggy Roeder  
Rhonda Ross  
Amy Rowell  
Winona Ryder  
Rep. Jan Schakowsky  
Lily Shaw

**Annabella Sciorra  
Michele Shay  
Carolyna Skywalker  
Sonja Smits  
Valerie Steele  
Amy Stiller  
Trudie Styler  
Meera Syal  
Victoria Tennant  
Lisa Tharps  
Harriet Thorpe  
Marisa Tomei  
Nancy Travis  
Rita Tushingham  
Joan Van Ark  
Lauren Velez  
Nina Wadia  
Jessica Walter  
Dawn Wells  
Lynn Whitfield  
JoBeth Williams  
Rita Wilson  
Susan Yerkes  
Mary Lou Zieve  
Eve  
Roseanne  
Amber Valetta**

**Melody Thomas Scott  
Brooke Shields  
Amy Smart  
Phoebe Snow  
Gloria Steinem  
Elizabeth Streb  
Sweet Honey in the Rock  
Holland Taylor  
Judy Tenuta  
Marlo Thomas  
Linda Tillery  
Lily Tomlin  
Sandra Tsing-Loh  
Alanna Ubach  
Amy Van Dyken  
Robbie Myrick Villalobos  
Marcia Wallace  
Kerry Washington  
Natalie West  
Dar Williams  
Kimberly Williams  
Kate Winslet  
Z Star  
Daphne Zuniga  
Free  
Ulali  
Zoya**

**Gail Shister  
Lois Smith  
Senator Jackie Speier  
Julia Stiles  
Nadine Strossen  
Loretta Swit  
Regina Taylor  
Mary Testa  
Lea Thompson  
Charlene Tilton  
Angelica Torn  
Tamara Tunie  
Sarah Underwood  
Joyce Van Patten  
Kathy Wade  
Mary Walsh  
Chloe Webb  
Lillias White  
Jacqueline Williams  
Ann Wilson  
Hattie Winston  
Kim Zachary  
BETTY  
Mikveh**