



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

date: 12/01/04

contact: fiona otway

ph:206.412.8083

fiona@breakingthesilence.info

**IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

## **Breaking the Silence**

***A video about HIV/AIDS created by Caribbean girls***

**Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 8pm, @ 911 Media Arts Center**

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, 911 Media Arts Center and the Women's Funding Alliance will join communities around the world in recognizing World AIDS Day with a special screening of *Breaking the Silence*, a video about HIV/AIDS created by girls in the Caribbean. Following the screening, there will be a facilitated discussion with guest speakers who will probe the connection between the spread of AIDS among young women and the role of media education in HIV prevention.

**Half of all new HIV infections around the world are among young women. (UNAIDS)**

*Breaking the Silence* focuses on the issue of gender inequity as a major risk-factor for HIV/AIDS. The premise of the program is that the legal, social and economic disadvantages faced by women and girls intensify their HIV vulnerability. *Breaking the Silence* seeks to change the fact that young women often have little control over when, where and how sex happens in their lives.

By putting young women behind video cameras and at the controls in edit suites, *Breaking the Silence* amplifies previously unheard voices, allowing girls to talk about sex on their own terms. *Breaking the Silence* addresses the spread of HIV at its root causes, empowering girls with tools they can use both in their intimate relationships and in community advocacy.

**"You'll find that young people, if they speak about AIDS, they're usually just touching the edges of the topic. This program gives us the opportunity to make a difference in our society." Juane St. Brice, Micoud Secondary School,  
*Breaking the Silence* filmmaker in St. Lucia, West Indies**

The *Breaking the Silence* video is written, shot, directed, and edited by thirteen teenage girls in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. This video is the culmination of six weeks of intensive training in media literacy, digital video production, self-esteem, peer leadership, and HIV/AIDS prevention. The girls' video has traveled around the world as an awareness-raising tool for thousands of viewers in classrooms, conferences, and community centers. Their video has also been broadcast on national television networks throughout the Caribbean.

*Breaking the Silence* is a special project of 911 Media Arts Center working in collaboration with the St. Lucia Planned Parenthood Association and the St. Lucia Red Cross Society.

**The international theme for World AIDS Day this year is women, girls, and HIV.**

More information is available at [www.breakingthesilence.info](http://www.breakingthesilence.info).