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WEDU PBS Recipient of Integrated Station Development Award Honoring Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign



Tampa, FL – WEDU PBS announced today that it was honored with a **PBS Development Award** during the annual **Public Media Development and Marketing Conference** held in Denver, Colorado.

The **Integrated Station Development Award**, presented to WEDU during the PBS Showcase Day of the conference, recognizes a station in which multiple departments work in tandem throughout the year to ensure fulfillment of mission. The award seeks to spotlight an outstanding station story and

service to the community.

WEDU was recognized for outstanding collaborative efforts for production of the original documentary ***Too Close To Home*** and accompanying campaign to raise awareness around Human Trafficking in the Tampa Bay area. Florida is the third largest destination state for human trafficking and the Tampa Bay area is among the highest in occurrences around the state.

In partnership with the **Allegany Franciscan Ministries**, which provided a \$100,000 grant for the project, WEDU PBS produced a half-hour documentary and half-hour roundtable exposing the Human Trafficking issue in the Tampa Bay area. Members of the station's Production, Marketing and Community Partnerships, Communications and Finance Departments worked with a variety of law enforcement, human trafficking survivors, and support organizations and created a network of resources in support of the documentary and a collection of community outreach activities.

The original documentary was premiered during a sold out event hosting more than 1300 guests at the historic Tampa Theatre. Attendees had an opportunity to speak with representatives from local organizations, participated in a virtual candle-light vigil for human trafficking victims, and heard personal stories from survivors. Guests left the emotional event armed with a better understanding of how to identify human trafficking incidents and were given wristbands with the Human Trafficking hotline phone number discretely inscribed on the inner side of the band.

The documentary has since aired over 50 times on WEDU PBS and WEDU Plus along with five public

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service announcements broadcast in both English and Spanish that continue to air on WEDU. In support of the on-air campaign, WEDU also produced informational cards with signs to identify Human Trafficking incidents or victims. More than 10,000 cards have been distributed through the Tampa Bay Healthcare Collaborative and the general public.

WEDU has also distributed more than 200 DVD copies of the documentary which has been used throughout the state at over 500 training sessions and is currently serving as presenting station to bring the program to PBS stations throughout the country.

The campaign also included an extensive webpage featuring the documentary, roundtable and an assortment of Human Trafficking resources. The webpage and digital efforts were supported by a grant from **The Junior League of Tampa**.

“*Too Close To Home* was amazing! I can’t say enough good things about your team’s work,” stated **Carissa Cutrell**, Public Affairs Officer for the Department of Homeland Security following the premiere screening event.

Since the release of WEDU’s original documentary, ***Too Close To Home*** and associated awareness campaign supported by community partners, the National Human Trafficking hotline has reported a nearly 40% increase in calls from the Tampa Bay area. This has led to 24 new cases being reported, compared to the same time period in 2013.

To learn more about WEDU’s Human Trafficking awareness campaign and to watch the original documentary ***Too Close To Home***, visit <http://www.wedu.org/humantrafficking/>.

If you suspect an incident of Human Trafficking or you need help, please call the Human Trafficking Hotline at: 1-888-3737-888.

ABOUT TOO CLOSE TO HOME

Behind our world-famous beaches, tourist attractions and sunny suburbs lies an alarming secret: Tampa Bay is a hotbed for human trafficking. Men, women and children are forced against their will to serve in the sex trade, domestic servitude and agricultural industries. They are bought, sold and discarded in our own community, making Florida the third-highest ranked state in the nation for this fast-growing crime. Local law enforcement, service providers and citizens are creating a grass roots movement to help combat this form of modern-day slavery. A companion to the documentary, ***Too Close To Home: A Roundtable Discussion***, delves further into specific local efforts to help human trafficking victims in Tampa Bay. The issues of safe housing, public health, funding and state legislation will be addressed to recognize the special needs of victims and educate the community on the many ways it can help. (Documentary Credits: Jack Conely, Executive Producer; Kristine Kelly, Director, Producer, Editor; Brad Clore, Videographer; Jeremy Peplow, Graphics, Camera; Pam Webb, Production Coordinator; Francisco Vega, Lighting Technician; Greg Hollingsworth, Production Technician.)

ABOUT GREATER PUBLIC (formerly Development Exchange, Inc.)

Greater Public provides nationwide leadership in fostering integrated and innovative business practices so that local communities can sustain high-quality public media. The roots of Greater Public originate with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and its establishment in 1974 of a Station Development Unit to assist local public radio stations in establishing and expanding their fundraising activities. As part of its work, CPB’s Station Development Unit began to host an annual Public Radio Workshop in the late 1970s to provide fundraising training. In 1982, in the wake of reduced federal funding, CPB discontinued its Station Development Unit and assisted with the formation of a new, independent organization to continue this important work. The Development Exchange, Inc. was incorporated in the District of Columbia in December, 1982, and the new organization opened its offices in January of 1983 in Washington, DC. The Development Exchange, Inc. was granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in October of that year.

ABOUT WEDU PBS

WEDU PBS is West Central Florida’s primary PBS station and public media company reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of media platforms including: television programming, station’s website, www.wedu.org and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU’s focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (ORC International’s DualFrame CARAVAN, January 2014). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU PBS, visit www.wedu.org, WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter or call 813.254.9338.

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