



## NEWS RELEASE

Vancouver, BC, Canada: For immediate release March 21, 2007

### **Can We Build A Better Hero? Unique Online Initiative to Prevent Relationship Violence Among Youth Awarded Partners in Prevention Grant.**

What makes a real hero? In the era of media sex and violence on demand, violent video games and action movies all available online, and with chilling accounts of real-life violence every day in the news, this is a question that needs to be asked.

Good Company Communications and WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre have partnered on a unique youth-driven project to prevent violence against women and girls. Their initiative *Good AttaDUDES: His and Hers Heroes Under Construction* was one of nine projects awarded a 'Partners in Prevention' grant from the BC Ministry of Community Services last Friday. This combination of hands-on new-media workshops and an online campaign will promote a "his and hers" approach to building healthy attitudes within relationships.

"This is such an exciting opportunity to continue our work with youth, both young women and young men, in a way that will truly have an impact on them," says Irene Elhaimer, Manager Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre (WAVAW). "We are thrilled to be partnering with Good Company, and to have received this funding to further our ongoing work in the area of violence prevention —to shift society for the future, which is part of our mandate."

This ground breaking project will work with grade 8 youth (of both genders) in the lower mainland and other parts of BC to develop both an understanding of the root causes of violence against women and girls, and a "new-media literacy." Participants will not only gain a critical understanding of the negative messages that flood youth culture in all media, but also how to create their own positive messages in a way that will be meaningful to their peers. The end goal of the project is for the youth team to help the messages they create "go viral," using the web as a way to reach many more youth where they already are.

"Youth are already spending huge amounts of time online, they are the ultimate 'social net workers!'" says Katherine Dodds, Founder & Creative Director of Good Company Communications. "This is where we need to reach them, and youth themselves are the experts in letting us know how to do that."

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#### **1 Backgrounder attached. For more information contact:**

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## BACKGROUNDER

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**WAVAW and partner Good Company Communications** were awarded a \$150,000 'Partners in Prevention' grant from the British Columbia Ministry of Community Services for their project: *Good AttaDUDEs: His and Hers Heroes Under Construction*. Their project was the only project focusing on new media within the workshop context and on using the internet as a means of distribution. For more information about the awards and the other eight recipients visit the province's website [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).

**Good Company Communications** (most famous for their work on Canada's top documentary *The Corporation*) has been using new media as a teaching tool as well as an end product, with an emphasis on using the web to distribute innovative and persuasive content since they formed in 2001. With hands-on youth projects like *Planetahead.ca* (Vancouver Coastal Health) the workshop series "Star in Your Own Stories" (Chee Mamuk, BC CDC) and the recent launch of the *Won't Get Weird* viral campaign ([bc.wontgetweird.com](http://bc.wontgetweird.com), Options For Sexual Health) they are poised to be one of the most innovative social marketing companies in Canada.

**WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) Rape Crisis Centre** is a non-profit organization that has been providing sexual assault support services to women and youth in the Greater Vancouver area since 1982. Our commitment is to not only ensuring that all women have access to vital sexual assault support services and advocacy, but that we are also actively working to prevent violence through education and awareness of the factors that lead to violence. We have delivered violence prevention workshops to volunteers, and co-ed programs throughout the lower mainland, including high schools, neighbourhood and community centres and numerous aboriginal youth centres and community programs. Our workshops interactively explore the many social issues that can contribute to violence against women.

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