

For Immediate Release

Raise Your Hand Auction Set for November 15

Major Fundraiser for WNCAP

Asheville (October 15, 2008) – Raise Your Hand, the annual fall fundraising event for the Western North Carolina AIDS Project that draws a large and enthusiastic crowd each year, will be held Saturday evening, November 15, in the Grand Ballroom of the Grove Park Inn.

Festivities will begin at 6 p.m. with a silent auction and reception, followed by dinner at 8 p.m. and a live auction conducted by professional auctioneer Richard Hatch. As usual, this year's event is expected to be a sell-out.

Glenis Redmond, the service-oriented poet who lends her time and experience to numerous causes, is the honorary chair of this year's Raise Your Hand auction. Redmond is a recent recipient of the North Carolina Literary Award and is a Denny C. Plattner Award winner for outstanding poetry.

In her statement of purpose, Redmond said, "WNCAP called and asked me to be their honorary chairperson for Raise Your Hand, and I could not say 'No.' As a past counselor, I have witnessed countless stories of how HIV/AIDS alters lives. In the face of the largeness, I am both honored and humbled to serve in this small way. When HIV/AIDS entered our field of vision in the 1980s, we had to reconfigure as a nation, as a community, and as individuals. We had to figure out different ways of being in the world."

"In 2008, we are still figuring it out, how to live and how to love. Yet, our grief is still palpable as we grapple with those we have lost," she said.

The 2007 Raise Your Hand auction raised more than \$80,000, and was attended by close to 350 people.

This year, the goal is even higher. Scores of items are being donated for the auction, including a two-week vacation in Tuscany, other trips, artwork, and gift certificates for a wide range of goods and services.

One of the highlights of the annual auction is the Signature Piece of original art that is chosen by a panel of professional jurors each year. This year's Signature Piece by Stephen Janton is titled *The Prophet*. It is painted in oil on gesso panel measuring 24 by 36 inches.

In his artist statement, Janton said, “I am a realist painter who enjoys the challenge of painting the human form. I have been so influenced and impressed by the Old Masters, the Dutch “Little Masters” and the best of the French academic painters of the 19th century. They carried oil painting to its highest pinnacle of technical perfection. In addition, having grown up in Wilmington, Delaware, I was exposed to the Brandywine School and the artists Pyle, the entire Wyeth family and my friend and guide, George Weymouth.”

Staging Raise Your Hand is a yearlong process and involves dozens of volunteers. Chairing the committee for a second year is Tracey Whitehouse.

For more information about Raise Your Hand or to purchase tickets for the event, visit the WNCAP website, www.wncap.org or call 828.252.7489.

The mission of WNCAP, founded in 1986, is to provide HIV-related services to the people of Western North Carolina through client services, prevention education and outreach in a collaborative and financially responsible manner.

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