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**DALAI LAMA VISITS SAN FRANCISCO
HONORS MARLENE SANCHEZ OF THE CENTER FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT FOR COMPASSIONATE WORK**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, November 3, 2005 – His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be the honored guest at a luncheon at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in San Francisco, California on, Sunday, November 6, 2005. His Holiness will acknowledge and thank forty-eight highly compassionate individuals – the honorees of the event *Unsung Heroes of Compassion 2005*.

“These individuals have been selected as representatives of the tens of thousands of people worldwide who quietly serve the disenfranchised and work to improve our communities through their personal efforts,” says event chair Dick Grace, founder of Grace Family Vineyards and board chair of Wisdom in Action, the organization hosting the unique celebration. “We don’t see them or hear about them in the daily news, but they exemplify a humanism and heroism to which we must each aspire.”

Among the honorees to be blessed by the Dalai Lama are:

- Marlene Sanchez, executive director of the Center for Young Women’s Development, which empowers young women who have been involved with the juvenile justice system to create positive change in their lives and communities.
- Bogaletch Gebre, the founder of Women’s Self-Help Center in Kembatta, Ethiopia which empowers women and their communities, and fights to eliminate harmful customary practices and other gender-based violence and abuse;
- Mary Kuriakose, a former nun born and raised in India whose work aids impoverished orphans;
- Cynthia Maung, a doctor who treats thousands of refugees each year at a clinic she founded on the border of Thailand and Burma;
- Donal Murphy, whose work has led to reconciliation between Irish Catholic and Protestant youth and adults in Ireland;
- Thuy Pham, whose return to Vietnam as a volunteer with the Catalyst Foundation’s Aid Expedition helped her heal her soul and alleviate the suffering of others;
- Lotay Tshering, the only General Surgeon in a rural hospital that cares for nearly one third of the six hundred thousand citizens of Bhutan.

The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the exiled leader of the Tibetan people and a Buddhist teacher. The 1989 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, the Dalai Lama is an outspoken proponent of nonviolence and compassion who is loved and revered internationally.

The Center for Young Women's Development
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Wisdom in Action (WIA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing awareness of the importance of compassion in action. WIA is hosting *Unsung Heroes of Compassion 2005* to raise awareness that it is each individual's obligation to help the disenfranchised among us and to acknowledge that each act of compassion makes an important difference to the world.

Co-hosting the event with Dick Grace will be Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk, interpreter for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and co-author of *The Monk and The Philosopher*. Other presenters will be: actor Peter Coyote; Director of San Francisco's Network Ministries, Glenda Hope (recipient of an *Unsung Heroes of Compassion 2001* award); Grammy winning singer/songwriter, Billy Dean; President and CEO of Global Fund for Women, Nandini Kavita Ramdas.

The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) is one of the first non-profits in the Nation run and led entirely by young women who have experienced poverty, and incarceration. CYWD works to empower and inspire young women to become community leaders, advocates, and agent of social change. CYWD merges the fields of service provision, youth development, advocacy and organizing while infusing what we do with culture and spirit. We do so in order to meet young women's needs while simultaneously giving them opportunities to develop their power. We embrace the hardest to reach young women: those who have been kicked out or dropped out of schools and mainstream service organizations; young women with multiple arrests and young women who have experienced years of incarceration and violence.

Marlene Sanchez came to the Center for Young Women's Development at age 15 looking for employment and a way out of the juvenile justice system. She was hired as a community health outreach worker and provided HIV/STD education and harm reduction supplies, and love to hundreds of young women who lived and worked in the underground street economies of San Francisco. Marlene has a passion for working with young women and girls who are involved in the juvenile justice system because of her personal experiences. In 1999, Marlene Sanchez was sworn in by the Superior Court of San Francisco as the first "youth" appointed to the San Francisco Juvenile Justice Commission, where she served for five years. She is currently the co-chair of the Community Justice Network for Youth, a national organization of community-based programs that serve youth of color in the juvenile justice system. Marlene provides training to organizations around the county looking to understand and adopt our vision, programs, and methodology.

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