

Cities Across America Are Joining The Movement: Due To The Reaction In New York City, Major U.S. Cities Are Inspired To Follow And Raise Funds For Students To See "SELMA" For Free

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Jan. 9, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Inspired by the overwhelming success in New York City, prominent members of the African-American business communities in major cities across America have teamed with Paramount Pictures to create funds for students to see the Golden Globe-nominated film "SELMA" for free in participating theaters. The cities joining the effort will be announced Monday, January 12th at 9:00 a.m. ET.

The New York City program provided free admission for 27,000 of the city's 7th, 8th and 9th grade students to see "SELMA" in participating local theaters. 27 African-American business leaders contributed to the fund and activated their network of contacts to put this program into motion, creating an impromptu and innovative public-private partnership for the greater good.

The students in these cities will provide a student ID or report card at any of the participating locations for free admittance. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. on January 12th and run through January 19th (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) or while tickets last.

"The response to our program in New York is better than we could have anticipated and we are truly moved by the generosity and outpouring of support," said Charles Phillips, CEO, Infor and Viacom Director. "The story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s heroic efforts in Alabama during the civil rights movement is an important chapter in our country's history - and one that still resonates deeply today. Due to the many generous donors, tens of thousands of students around the country will have the opportunity to experience this extraordinary film."

The New York community has rallied to get the word out on "SELMA." Major institutions including the New York City Department of Education, KIPP Schools, New York City Housing Authority, Schomburg Museum, Eagle Academy, Harlem Children Zone, Harlem Village Academy, Abyssinian Baptist Church, The Boys and Girls Club, the New York Public Library, and local radio stations are reaching out to students and informing them of this wonderful opportunity.

Theaters are reporting unprecedented calls for group screenings as entire classes want to attend together. In addition, many screenings are followed by discussions, and a recommended reading list has been compiled for further learning. This is a rare moment when a film has transformed into a cultural movement in recognition of a highly relevant message that touched many people.

Directed by DuVernay and starring David Oyelowo as Martin Luther King Jr., "SELMA" has been nominated for four Golden Globes: Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Director and Best Song ("Glory" by Common and John Legend).

The film also stars Tom Wilkinson, Cuba Gooding Jr., Alessandro Nivola, Giovanni Ribisi, Common, Carmen Ejogo, Lorraine Toussaint, with Tim Roth and Oprah Winfrey as "Annie Lee Cooper."

Paramount Pictures, Pathe, and Harpo Films present "SELMA." Produced by Christian Colson, Dede Gardner, Jeremy Kleiner, Oprah Winfrey, the film is executive produced by Brad Pitt, Cameron McCracken, Diarmuid McKeown, Nik Bower, Ava DuVernay, Paul Ganes and Nan Morales. The film is written by Paul Webb. "SELMA" is directed by Ava DuVernay.

"SELMA" is the story of a movement. The film chronicles the tumultuous three-month period in 1965, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a dangerous campaign to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. The epic march from Selma to Montgomery culminated in President Johnson (Tom Wilkinson) signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant victories for the civil rights movement. Director Ava DuVernay's "SELMA" tells the story of how the revered leader and visionary Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (David Oyelowo) and his brothers and sisters in the movement prompted change that forever altered history.

Currently open in select cities, "SELMA" opens in theaters nationwide on January 9th, 2015. To learn more about the film, go to www.selmamovie.com.

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Media Contacts:

Edelman

Renee Edelman

(212) 704-8249

renee.edelman@edelman.com

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