



SASS, SEX AND SERENITY PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF CANCER AWARENESS IN THE 4TH ANNUAL BREAST FEST FILM FESTIVAL

(Toronto, October 27, 2011) – The fourth annual **Breast Fest**, the world's first and only breast cancer film festival, opens **November 18** in Toronto with Patricia Zagarella's groundbreaking and thought-provoking documentary **BARING IT ALL**. Presented by Rethink Breast Cancer, **Breast Fest** was initiated to inspire dialogue, facilitate learning and foster community through film and arts. Screenings and panels will take place at the Royal Ontario Museum. For more information and to purchase tickets visit www.breastfestfilmfest.com.

This year's festival, continuing through **November 20**, includes powerful documentary and dramatic films along with a high profile speakers series that address key issues that are currently affecting the breast cancer community.

Special guests at this year's festival include: Patricia Zagarella, David Jay, Elvira Kurt, Sandra Battaglini, Gavin Crawford, Tania Katan, Allison Lane, Sandra Shamas, Dawn Whitwell, Richard Crouse, Michael McGowan, Phyllis Ellis, the cast of *About Her*, Scott Adams, Catherine Birch and Peter Laneas.

"We are extremely proud that Breast Fest has become an important platform to showcase films and special guests that focus on breast cancer issues from around the world," said Alison Gordon, Vice-President, Rethink Breast Cancer. "The spectrum and scope of this year's programme highlight the undiscriminating nature of this disease and the resilience and determination of the individuals affected by breast cancer."

Among this year's topics the phenomenon of comedies about cancer will be explored at a panel moderated by Richard Crouse on Sunday November 20. Additionally, Breast Fest will present **Tits N' Sass: An Evening of Comedy** benefitting Rethink Breast Cancer hosted by Elvira Kurt on Saturday, November 19.

"Cancer and comedy is a hot topic right now with films like *50/50* and TV shows such as the *Big C* using levity and humour as a vehicle to discuss serious issues," said Michelle Rothstein, Artistic Director for Breast Fest. "This year we are kicking off the inaugural **Tits N' Sass** comedy night with a panel discussion on comedy to encourage those attending the festival to find different ways of approaching and thinking about breast cancer."

Breast Fest takes an innovative approach to breast cancer education and support by using the powerful medium of film to shed light on many of the issues women today are facing around this disease. Over 30 young women with breast cancer from across Canada will participate in a subsidy program to attend the festival.

Breast Fest Film Festival 2011 Programme:

FILM PROGRAMMING

Baring it All – Patricia Zagarella (USA) This year's opening night film, *Baring it All* follows fashion photographer David Jay into the worlds of four young breast cancer survivors, including Canadian Sylvia Soo, as he creates a photographic series of women who have experienced breast cancer, exploring their journeys and being photographed for the Pulitzer nominated *Scar Project*. *Friday, November 18 at 8 pm. Director Patricia Zagarella and David Jay will be in attendance.*

Crazy Sexy Cancer – Kris Carr (USA)

In this irreverent and uplifting documentary, actress and photographer Kris Carr looks for a cure after she is diagnosed with a rare, incurable stage IV cancer.

Saturday, November 19 at 1 pm

Stricken – Reinout Oerleman. (The Netherlands) Featuring dynamic, award-winning performances by Barry Atsma and Carice van Houten, this box office sensation from the Netherlands is a bold and mesmerizing film that tackles notions of fidelity and devotion from the perspective of the partner of a young woman with breast cancer.

Saturday, November 19 at 4 pm.

One of the 1 Percent – The Sandy Ahenakew Story – Sandra Ahenakew, Tracy Stevens (Canada) Breast cancer survivors represent one per cent of the female population. Sandy Ahenakew is one of the one percent. This insightful and life-affirming documentary, told from an aboriginal woman's point of view, explores the unique story of Sandy's family and their experiences living with cancer.

Sunday, November 20 at 11:00 am. Director Sandra Ahenakew will be in attendance.

About Her – Phyllis Ellis (Canada) Closing Night Film – Featuring the voice of Canadian actress Kim Cattrall, *About Her* is a moving and powerful documentary that captures the brave and honest stories of nine young women across Canada who have been diagnosed with HER2+ breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease.

Sunday, November 20 at 4 pm. Director Phyllis Ellis and the cast will be in attendance.

SPECIAL EVENT – TITS N' SASS: AN EVENING OF COMEDY TO BENEFIT RETHINK BREAST CANCER Co-presented with The Comedy Network, *Tits N' Sass* is a night of intelligent and irreverent humour in support of a great cause. Hosted by the extraordinary Elvira Kurt, the evening features an outstanding roster of stand-up and comedic performers including: Sandra Battaglini, Gavin Crawford, Tania Katan, Allison Lane, Sandra Shamas and Dawn Whitwell.

Tits N' Sass is produced by Dawn Whitwell and Rethink Breast Cancer.

Saturday, November 19. Door Opens 6:30 pm, Show 8 pm

SPEAKER SERIES

• **Making Waves: How Young Adults With Cancer Are Taking Action**

A lively discussion about the unique experiences of young adult cancer survivors and what compels them to take action in their communities. From political advocacy and raising awareness to blogging and creating peer support networks, they demonstrate that cancer can be a catalyst for change.

Moderator: Tasha Westerman - Rethink Breast Cancer Support Committee & Peer Volunteer, Calgary

Panelists: Scott Adams -Director "CancerFightClub.com", Hope and Cope Wellness Centre, Montreal; Catherine Birch Rethink Breast Cancer Support Committee, Ottawa; Peter Laneas -National Spokesperson for The Canadian Testicular Cancer Association, Toronto.

Saturday November 19, immediately following the screening of Crazy Sexy Cancer

• **Between the Mainstream and the Medicine Wheel: Aboriginal Women and Breast Cancer**

A candid conversation examining the barriers to information, screening and cancer treatment for Native women and new culturally relevant service models that are being implemented in communities across the country.

Sunday November 20, immediately following One of the 1 Per Cent: The Sandy Ahenakew Story

• **Comedy and Cancer: How humour is used to discuss serious illness**

Cancer comedies are spreading across screens big and small, from *The Big C* and other hit TV shows to feature films. With cancer comedy, there's a fine line between being funny and socially relevant and creating offense. This panel discussion explores how artists negotiate this line.

Moderator: Richard Crouse, Film Critic

Panelists: Tania Katan, Author, Playwright, Comedic Performer; Allison Lane, Comic, Entrepreneur; Michael McGowan, Filmmaker, Screenwriter.

Sunday November 20, preceded by The Big C, Season 1, Episode 3

All screenings will take place at the Royal Ontario Museum Theatre, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario. Opening night tickets are \$18 and tickets for all other screenings are \$10 per. Tickets for *Tits N' Sass* are \$25. To view show times and purchase tickets, or to find out more about the festival, please visit www.breastfestfilmfest.com.

Proud sponsors of the Breast Fest Film Festival include Schick Quattro for Women, NOW Magazine, Alliance Films, and The Comedy Network. The Speaker Series is supported by Dynamic Funds

About Rethink Breast Cancer

Rethink Breast Cancer is an innovative charity that reaches out to young people concerned about and affected by breast cancer. 2011 marks the 10th anniversary of the first ever Canadian charity to bring bold, relevant awareness to the under 40s crowd; foster a new generation of young and influential breast cancer supporters; infuse sass and style into the cause; and, most importantly, respond to the unique needs of young (and youngish) women going through it. By taking a breakthrough approach to all aspects of breast cancer – medical research, support, public awareness and fundraising – Rethink Breast Cancer is thinking differently about how to beat breast cancer. To find out more about Rethink Breast Cancer, visit www.rethinkbreastcancer.com.

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