



135 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105

CONTACT: Alisa Dzananovic
(860) 525-1163, Ext. 292
alisad@ywcahartford.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Filmmaker & YWCA Partner to Focus on America's Obsession with Beauty

YWCA Hartford Region and YWCA New Britain Host Connecticut premiere of America the Beautiful

[Hartford, CT, February 18, 2009] – In almost 40,000 media messages a year, young Americans are being told that unless you look like a supermodel or rock star, you're simply not good enough. This is a message that too many people are buying.

Filmmaker Darryl Roberts, in a unique partnership with the YWCA, goes on a two year journey to examine America's new obsession; physical perfection. In *America the Beautiful*, secrets, confessions, and strikingly harsh realities are learned as Roberts unearths the origins and deadly risks of our nation's quest for physical perfection.

"The concept of female beauty is exclusionary, alienating those who don't meet the standards of an artificial 'ideal.' This issue affects every woman and girl in America," says Lorraine Cole, YWCA USA's CEO. "It is time we ignite a cultural change in this nation to end the harmful pursuit of the elusive beauty myth."

There is an epidemic of young girls who suffer from low self-esteem related to body image when exposed to models on glossy pages of supermarket magazines. They find themselves wishing they looked more like 'that'. The hope of achieving these 'ideals' has consumers purchasing cosmetics, toiletries, fashion and plastic surgeries at increasingly dramatic rates.

The YWCA Hartford Region and YWCA New Britain, in a joint advocacy effort to confront the superficiality and health threats of beauty standards in this country, are hosting the Connecticut area premiere of *America the Beautiful* on Thursday, March 5 at the University of Hartford (Wilson Wilde Auditorium). Roberts will be on hand to lead a question and answer discussion after the film. General admission tickets for the 7 p.m. movie are \$10, \$5 for students.

At the heart of *America the Beautiful* is the true story of Gerren Taylor, a teenager who went from being an innocent 12-year-old girl to becoming one of America's next top supermodels. As

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her career progresses, viewers watch the dichotomy between Gerren's adolescent struggles and her adult "rights of passage" on the catwalks of Marc Jacobs, DKNY, Tommy Hilfiger and other top designers. It becomes apparent how the same beauty that jump-started her career would ultimately destroy her young life.

Roberts delves deep into America's culture of fear, consumption, and idolatry for all things external and seeks answers from celebrities, media, academia, as well as everyday Americans. He asks Paris Hilton, Jessica Simpson, Aisha Tyler, Anthony Kedis, Tisha Campbell, Julianne Moore, Michael Beach, Mena Suvari, Martin Short, as well as Ted Casablanca from the E! Channel and Susan Schulz, the Editor-in-Chief of CosmoGirl!, plus others, the major question at hand... *Does America have an unhealthy obsession with beauty?*

For Calendar Listings:

Connecticut Premiere of *America the Beautiful*. Filmmaker Darryl Roberts goes on a five-year journey to examine America's new obsession; physical perfection and reveals secrets, confessions, and strikingly harsh realities as he unearths the origins and deadly risks of our nation's quest for physical perfection. 7 p.m., Thursday, March 5 at University of Hartford's Wilson Wilde Auditorium, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford. The premiere is presented by the YWCA Hartford Region and YWCA New Britain. For tickets and more information call (860) 225-4681, Ext. 204.