

VDAY

OTTAWA UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS

MEDIA RELEASE

***THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES* SHATTERS TABOOS, RAISES AWARENESS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

(Ottawa – February 17, 2010) – Ottawa V-Day, part of a global campaign to end violence against women and girls, will host three benefit productions of *The Vagina Monologues* on Friday, February 26 and Saturday, February 27 at the National Gallery of Canada.

“Our goal is raise community awareness and help end violence against women and girls,” explains producer Rima Zabian.

“Money raised will be donated to a variety of women’s groups in Ottawa. Over the past two years, funds have supported several new programs at the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa and the education for women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

The *Vagina Monologues*, written by playwright/activist Eve Ensler, is based on interviews with more than 200 women. With humor and grace, the play celebrates women’s sexuality and strength, while raising awareness about the reality of violence many women face. In fact, according to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, only 10 per cent of sexual assaults on women are reported to the police.

“Raising a daughter, it is important for me that she be a strong, independent woman and live in a community that is free of violence,” says director Lorrie Beaton. She joined Ottawa V-Day to direct the production to contribute to spreading the word about the need to end violence against women and girls.

For the Ottawa production, actors are researching a series of “Happy Vagina Facts” and “Not So Happy Facts” that will be

presented during the performances. So far, the research shows that Ottawa is not immune to violence. According to the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, in 2007-2008, Ottawa police responded to 2,440 total domestic violence occurrences where charges were laid and/or warrants sought - that's almost 7 charges per day. In 2007, Ottawa shelters provided safe housing for 544 women and 444 children; however, due to overwhelming demand, the shelters had to turn away 3,281 women.

Tickets are \$20 (\$25 at the door) and are available at five locations in the city: Venus Envy, 320 Lisgar Street (close to Bank); Collected Works, 1242 Wellington Street West (close to Parkdale); Sophia Esthetic, 190 Maclaren St., 2nd floor; Mother Tongue Books, 1067 Bank Street (near Sunnyside); and Ottawa Women's Credit Union, 271 Bank Street (near Somerset).

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