

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PRODUCERS RESPOND TO EVESHAM TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT DECISION TO SUSPEND USE OF THE FILM "THAT'S A FAMILY!"**

#### **REPRESENTATIVE WILL ATTEND BOARD MEETING EVENING OF 2/13**

San Francisco, CA..... Women's Educational Media (WEM), the producers of the film *That's a Family!* releases the following statement regarding the suspension of the film's use in classrooms and the formation of a special review committee to examine the film and its inclusion in the health curriculum.

**NOTE TO MEDIA ATTENDING THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING ON 2/13:** A representative of WEM will be at the Tuesday, February 13 school board media and will be available for comment prior to the meeting and on Wednesday February 14th. For more information or to schedule an interview contact Renna Communications.

#### **The following statement can be attributed to Debra Chasnoff, Executive Director of Women's Educational Media:**

*"That's a Family!* is part of Women's Educational Media's Respect for All Project that seeks to create safe, hate-free schools and communities. The film was made to help children in grades K-8 understand the different shapes families take today. One look at the latest census report by the U.S. government confirms that families in this country take many forms.

*That's a Family!* shows the lives of diverse families through the eyes and the words of children. It's important to note that all of the issues explored within the film are expressed in developmentally appropriate language. None of the children we interviewed for the film talked or asked about sex. That is simply not what is on the minds of third-graders. Instead, the children in the film talk candidly about what it's like to grow up in a family with parents of different races or religions, divorced parents or a single parent, gay or lesbian parents, adoptive parents or grandparents as guardians.

Simply put, *That's a Family!* takes the lesson of the Golden Rule and illustrates it with real world examples for children and by children. The unfortunate anti-gay hostilities expressed recently by some parents in Evesham Township are proof that this lesson is needed now more than ever.

Some parents have argued that these issues should be addressed at home, which – of course – they should. But the reality is that teachers in elementary schools across the country report a phenomenon of bullying and harassment based on individual and family differences – especially using homophobic slurs – beginning as early as kindergarten.

That's the reason that the New Jersey Department of Education encourages schools in the state to use *That's a Family!* within a third grade curriculum and why the film is distributed with the support of many nationally respected organizations, including the National Education Association, the Child Welfare League of America and the National Association of School Psychologists.

We appreciate that the Evesham Township school district already has fair and inclusive policies around harassment, intimidation and bullying. Indeed, we hope that the review committee will uphold the values stated in the school district's own policies about preventing bullying based on sexual orientation and will follow through on its own mandate to maintain anti-bullying programs.

We urge the committee to consider these facts: families like those in our film exist in their school district – including families with same-sex parents – and **all** of their children deserve a safe environment, an environment devoid of harassment, intimidation and bullying that enables the students to focus on learning.

*That's a Family!* is an excellent tool to help create an environment of mutual respect within Evesham Township schools, and Women's Educational Media's is confident that – upon thoughtful examination – the review committee will indeed see the tremendous value of *That's a Family!* and the principle it promotes of respect for all."

For more information or to schedule an interview contact Renna Communications.

*Since 1978, Women's Educational Media has produced and distributed films and educational resources on issues ranging from environmental concerns to affordable housing to preventing prejudice. Working closely with educators, activists, national and local organizations, we ensure that our films are used to inspire meaningful social change.*