



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Elizabeth Cho
212. 261.4361

Over 2000 women gather at 22nd Celebrating Women® Breakfast to raise more than \$1.3 million

New York —On Thursday, May 14, 2009, The New York Women's Foundation® (NYWF®) drew over 2000 women and men and announced the launch of its new initiative, **RISE-NYC!** at the 22nd annual Celebrating Women® Breakfast at the New York Hilton. The community event raised more than \$1.3 million to fund the work of its grantee partners who work tirelessly on behalf of New York City's low-income women and girls.

At the Breakfast, NYWF® celebrated the accomplishments of trailblazing women. This year's honorees were: **Ambassador Swanee Hunt**, whose illustrious career as a diplomat, professor, and philanthropist spans decades; Grammy Award winner **Angèlique Kidjo**, one of the most electrifying performers in pop music and UNICEF and OXFAM goodwill Ambassador; **Lilly Ledbetter**, whose indefatigable advocacy for pay equity led to the creation of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act signed into law by President Obama on January 29, 2009; and Golden Globe and Grammy Award winner as well as Oscar nominee, **Queen Latifah**, acclaimed actress, musician, model and entrepreneur.

Throughout the morning, many government officials and distinguished guests spoke in addition to the honorees. New York City **Mayor Bloomberg** applauded NYWF® for being the "source of hope and support for so many women living in poverty" and noted that "support is even more important now during these tough economic times." **Governor Paterson** commended NYWF® for "improving the community as a whole, for all people." **Ambassador Swanee Hunt** thanked guests for "caring for New York City." **Lilly Ledbetter** spoke rousingly about using her voice to "champion the bill for equal pay for equal work for young women who come after me."

Queen Latifah recognized the work of NYWF® grantee partners stating, "This is the kind of help that can change a person's life." Pledging \$10,000, she launched **RISE-NYC!**, a three year strategic initiative by the NYWF® that responds to the harshest economic downturn in decades by distributing a minimum of \$10 million to New York City community-based organizations working with women and families hardest hit by the economic crisis. Grantee partner speakers **Shaquanna Blount**, participant of Girls Education and Mentoring Services and **Leslie Campbell**, participant of College and Community Fellowship, moved audiences with their stories of courage, perseverance and transformation. Liberian Peace and Human Right Activist, **Leymah Gbowee** introduced **Angèlique Kidjo** who closed the morning with a spellbinding performance.

"This is a moment of crisis but also a tremendous opportunity to make a difference," said NYWF® President and CEO, **Ana L. Oliveira**, "the Foundation will maintain and increase the level of grantmaking with **RISE-NYC!** We invite all New Yorkers to take action and join **RISE-NYC!** because this is when women and families in New York City need most assistance, help and support. Nobody does it alone."

For more information about **RISE-NYC!** please visit www.risenyc.org or email risenyc@nywf.org.

The New York Women's Foundation (NYWF) was established in 1987 as a public philanthropy to be a voice for women and a force for change. We are a cross-cultural alliance of women helping low-income women and girls in the five boroughs to achieve sustained economic security through expanded opportunities. We work together to transform the conditions of poverty and to create an equal and just future for low-income women and girls.