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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Living Quilt Marks National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**

Tuesday March 10, 2009—The Southern AIDS Living Quilt, a unique project that collects and shares video content of women on the front lines of HIV/AIDS, today recognized National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

The theme of this year's Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, "HIV is Right Here at Home," parallels the Living Quilt's central mission to illustrate the growing impact of HIV/AIDS on women in the southern United States, particularly women of color.

"The Southern AIDS Living Quilt shows the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls and offers a positive message of hope and empowerment after testing positive for HIV," said Patrick Packer, Executive Director of the Southern AIDS Coalition. "The National Day of Awareness reminds us of the importance of women and girls knowing their HIV status. The women of the Living Quilt encourage all of us to know our status and to get tested for this serious disease. The Living Quilt shares the personal stories of women living with HIV/AIDS and underscores the critical importance of making HIV screening a routine part of medical care in order to ensure earlier diagnosis and prevent the spread of the disease. The Living Quilt provides links to valuable resources and fact sheets about the epidemic to empower those directly impacted to make informed healthcare decisions and to help others understand the power of knowing their HIV status. Just as important, the people on the Quilt remind us that there are individual faces behind the numbers and statistics of those living with HIV and AIDS.

The Center for Disease Control estimates that one in five Americans do not know that they are infected with HIV/AIDS. The Southern AIDS Living Quilt has responded to the dire need to increase HIV/AIDS awareness. The shared stories on the [www.livingquilt.org](http://www.livingquilt.org) are inspirational, eye opening, and most importantly, they encourage women to get tested and know their status.

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