Hollywood’s Master Storytellers Head to India on Teaching Trip

University of Southern California Program Co-Sponsors International Entertainment Education Conference and Takes Top TV and Film Writers, Producers to New Delhi

A group of Hollywood writers and producers of top TV shows and films will participate in the 5th International Entertainment Education Conference in New Delhi, India, from Nov. 17–20, 2011, where they will join in panel discussions, lead a workshop on the power of storytelling, and screen an influential documentary film about climate change.

The visit, whose goal is to teach conference participants on ways to use storytelling for social progress, is organized by Hollywood Health & Society (HH&S), a program of the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism in Los Angeles. HH&S, which is a co-sponsor of the conference, has a long history of connecting screenwriters with experts to obtain accurate health information for their scripts, serving as a free resource for public health information to the entertainment industry. HH&S is funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, among others.

“We are thrilled to bring some of Hollywood’s master storytellers to India to share their insights with entertainment education experts from around the world,” said HH&S Director Sandra de Castro Buffington, who’s leading the trip. “Their stories can be a powerful force for social change on a global scale.”

Four writers and producers are participating in the trip: Christopher Keyser, president of the Writers Guild of America, West; Zoanne Clack (Grey’s Anatomy); Michael Nash (Climate Refugees); and Walt Disney Feature Animation executive Karen Tenkhoff.

HH&S-sponsored events will be held on Nov. 19, 2011, at the conference site’s Habitat Centre in New Delhi. The events include:

- A plenary panel from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. called “Insiders for the Day,” to showcase clips of the health storylines of top Bollywood and Hollywood TV and film writers and producers. The panel will include Christopher Keyser, president of the Writers Guild of America, West; Zoanne Clack (Grey’s Anatomy); Vinta Nanda (Tara, Raahat); Michael Nash (Climate Refugees); Walt Disney Feature Animation executive Karen Tenkhoff; and Sandra de Castro Buffington, HH&S director. Topics will include writing TV dramas about health concerns; the entertainment industry’s approach to programming about health issues in India and the US; writers’ individual techniques for writing dramas with social impact; and television as a vehicle for social change.

- A workshop, from 1:30 to 5 p.m., dedicated to teaching storytelling techniques, titled “The Power of Story: Learning Storytelling Techniques from Hollywood Master Storytellers.” Led by HH&S Director
Sandra de Castro Buffington, the workshop will include presentations and hands-on practical storytelling training by Christopher Keyser, president of the Writers Guild of America, West; Zoanne Clack (Grey’s Anatomy); Michael Nash (Climate Refugees); and Walt Disney Feature Animation executive Karen Tenkhoff.

- A film screening at 5:30 p.m. of Climate Refugees, a documentary that shows the human face of climate change, followed by a Q&A with the film’s director, Michael Nash, and HH&S Director Sandra de Castro Buffington.

Hollywood, Health & Society, a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, is a one-stop-shop for television writers, producers and others in search of credible information on a wide range of public health topics, including free consultations and briefings with experts. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The California Endowment, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Cancer Institute, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Barr Foundation, Hollywood, Health & Society is based at the USC Annenberg School’s Norman Lear Center. The HH&S Global Health Initiative focuses on entertainment education around critical global health topics such as HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, polio, neglected tropical diseases and maternal & child health. For more information about resources for writers, visit www.usc.edu/hhs.

The Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center studying and shaping the impact of entertainment and media on society. Based at the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, the Lear Center works to bridge the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. For more information, visit www.learcenter.org.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism is a national leader in education and scholarship in the fields of communication, journalism, public diplomacy and public relations. With an enrollment of more than 2,200 students, USC Annenberg offers doctoral, master’s and bachelor's degree programs, as well as continuing development programs for working professionals, across a broad scope of academic inquiry. The school’s comprehensive curriculum emphasizes the core skills of leadership, innovation, service and entrepreneurship and draws upon the resources of a networked university located in the media capital of the world.