

"Students Are Heroes: A Sickle Cell Warriors Story" Spotlight by African American Women In Cinema during Sundance Fest

Panel discussion with America's Blood Centers and Sickle Cell Consortium to raise awareness about this cause during National Blood Donor Month

NEW YORK , NY, UNITED STATES, January 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The film "Students Are Heroes: A Sickle Cell Warriors Story," will be showcased by African American Women In Cinema ([AAWIC](#)) on January 25th in conjunction with the Sundance Film Festival, highlighting the importance of blood donations. Currently only 12.2% of blood donations in the U.S. coming from minority donors and only 3% total of eligible U.S. population is donating blood each year. The director, Keenan "Special" Bristol, is a passionate storyteller with a non-profit called [Music Brings Life](#) that has partnered with America's Blood Centers and the Sickle Cell Consortium for a panel discussion that will immediately follow the film designed to raise visibility for this cause.

Students Are Heroes tells the powerful story of Jordana Bristol, a high school athlete whose life is upended when she collapses during track practice. Diagnosed with a sickle cell crisis, Jordana faces a harrowing journey as her health complications, exacerbated by antibodies from previous blood transfusions, create a desperate need for genetically matched blood donors. The film brings to light the critical realities faced by those living with sickle cell disease while celebrating the resilience of the human spirit.



Director Keenan "Special" Bristol



Students Are Heroes (Movie Poster)

Keenan is known for his ability to explore profound human experiences, and this emotionally resonant narrative underscores the importance of increasing awareness, which is how he felt compelled to become an activist. He shared his inspiration behind the film: "This story is a tribute to the countless individuals battling sickle cell disease, their families, and the heroes who step forward to donate blood. It's a call to action for greater awareness and compassion. I am honored to present this film in a space that uplifts diverse voices and stories." He focuses on sharing facts and helping people relate to the cause in an engaging format.



The Students Are Heroes screening is part of AAWIC's broader program, which includes a keynote panel titled "The Politics of Black Women in Film." This panel will feature leading voices in the film industry and examine the intersections of race, gender, and representation in cinema. Founder and President of African American Women In Cinema Organization, Inc. (AAWIC), Terra Renee has utilized her filmmaking experience to serve as a continuously support the vibrant work of women and is a strong voice for the community. In addition to the screening, the event will celebrate the legendary Luther Vandross with a special experience honoring his life and music. The program will conclude with a VIP reception, allowing attendees to network and reflect on the day's discussions and highlights.

Date: January 25, 2025

Film to Show: 2:00pm to 3:30pm

Location: Utah Film Studios, Salt Lake City, Utah

[Ticket Link](#)

Panel Discussion will Immediately Following Featuring:

Terra Renee, African American Women In Cinema Organization, Inc.; Kate Fry, CEO, America's Blood Centers; Keenan "Special" Bristol, Movie Director and Founder of Music Brings Life.

Keenan "Special" Bristol and the entire creative team are excited to share this film with an audience dedicated to celebrating the richness of Black narratives in cinema. Keenan is available for interviews before and after the screening, please reach out to Marie Driven Theodore at marie@playbookmg.com to schedule. Likewise email Marie for more info, to cover the event, and coordinate interviews with Terra from African American Women In Cinema Organization, Inc. or

Jeff with America's Blood Centers.

These events coincide with National Blood Donor Month celebrated each January. President Richard Nixon proclaimed January 1970 as the first National Blood Donor Month on December 31, 1969 to pay tribute to voluntary blood donors and encourage individuals to become blood donors and this month continues to be celebrated each year. For more information, visit BloodDonorMonth.org.

About Music Brings Life --

Music Brings Life is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that educates young people in the Black, Latino, and Caribbean communities about the importance of donating blood. Founded in 2009, Music Brings Life delivers educational presentations and hosts music events to inspire and engage with prospective donors in ethnic communities. Additionally, we facilitate the donation process by partnering with blood collection agencies across the country.

About African American Women In Cinema Organization, Inc. --

African American Women In Cinema (AAWIC) is a 501 c3 non-profit organization who serves as a continuous support for the vibrant work of women filmmakers for the past twenty-five years. AAWIC provides a platform to showcase aligning experienced and novice filmmakers, directors, producers, screenwriters and actors.

About American Blood Centers --

Founded in 1962, America's Blood Centers (ABC) is the national organization bringing together community-based, independent blood centers across North America. These organizations operate in more than 1,100 communities and provide close to 60 percent of the U.S. and a quarter of the Canadian blood supply. ABC member organizations serve more than 150 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 3,500 hospitals and healthcare facilities. All ABC U.S. members are 501(c)(3) organizations licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or Health Canada. For more information, visit www.AmericasBlood.org.

About The Sickle Cell Community Consortium --

The Sickle Cell Community Consortium, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 2014 to harness and amplify the power of the patient voice. Based in the United States, the Consortium unites sickle cell community-based organizations (CBOs), patient and caregiver advocates, community partners, and medical and research advisors. Together, these stakeholders form the General Assembly of CBOs and Advocates, the Consortium's decision-making body. Through a Collective Impact model, the Consortium identifies challenges and gaps within the sickle cell community, develops strategies to address those needs, and fosters partnerships with CBOs, communities, and corporations. This collaborative framework drives sustainable, transformative change for individuals and families impacted by sickle cell disease.

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