



July 19, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Heidi Holtz, 315-474-2489, hholtz@giffordfd.org

SYRACUSE INCLUDED AS PART OF UPCOMING PBS SERIES

Gifford Foundation Coordinates Inclusion of Syracuse in “Building Healthy Communities” Series for Public Broadcasting System

(Syracuse, NY) The Gifford Foundation announces that the Media & Policy Center, the acclaimed and award-winning producers of *And Thou Shalt Honor* and *Edens Lost & Found*, has selected Syracuse for a segment on their upcoming documentary series entitled *Building Healthy Communities*, which will be broadcast on the Public Broadcasting System in 2011. Hosted by Dr. Richard J. Jackson, Chair and Professor of Environmental Public Health at UCLA’s School of Public Health, *Building Healthy Communities* will visit locations across America that typify the public health challenges and offer best practice solutions to improving the nation’s overall health by creating more sustainable and livable communities. Dr. Jackson was one of the first experts in the public health arena to suggest that the built environment was making people sick. The PBS series that is being developed focuses on innovative programs that are currently

- more -

being developed to alleviate or at least mitigate the impacts of poor urban planning and environmental policy decisions.

Funding received thus far for the segment is provided by Syracuse University, the Gifford Foundation, the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, Alliance Bank, the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Centerstate CEO, Franciscan Management Services, National Grid, St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center Foundation and Upstate Medical University. Filming will take place during the last week of July.

The producers came to know Syracuse this past spring when the Gifford Foundation presented one of their films, *Philadelphia: The Holy Experiment* (part of the *Edens Lost and Found* series on PBS) during their "What If..." Film Series. In a follow-up email citing the strongly positive response to the screening, Gifford Foundation executive director Kathy Goldfarb-Findling noted that "as a small city, we frequently find real inspiration in seeing how we might learn from others."

Producer Harry Wiland was intrigued about Syracuse, since they are now filming in Elgin Illinois - another small city facing similar challenges. After learning about the variety of conversations being held and programs being implemented here on issues of sprawl, water management, transportation, food policy, etc. they selected Syracuse for inclusion in the series. Dr. Jackson will also be present during the filming.

"Dr. Jackson is a visionary whose work has finally been given the recognition it deserves. We feel honored to be working with him on such a groundbreaking PBS series," said Wiland and co-producer Dale Bell at a recent press conference introducing the series.

- more -

The Media & Policy Center (www.mediapolicycenter.org), based in Santa Monica California, was founded by Wiland and Bell, whose individual projects have won an Academy Award, five Emmys, one Peabody, two Christophers, two Cine Golden Eagles, among numerous other accolades. In 2006 they were elected as Ashoka Fellows for their innovative media model, the only media professionals to be so honored. The Center's productions for PBS, network television, cable, cinemas, and the web reflect Wiland and Bell's philosophy: "We formed the MPC to apply our talents and experience to issues of social welfare, public policy, education, the environment, and health care. The MPC's primary goal is to inform, challenge, and ultimately engage a responsive citizenry and to encourage full and meaningful debate and participation across the political, social, and economic spectrum. We work towards this end by using our media talents to create televised and coordinated multi-media projects that enlighten, educate and empower those members of our society who seek to change their lives and their communities."

"The Media & Policy Center's interest in Syracuse shows that the challenges we face here resonate with those faced by cities nationally and globally," says Syracuse University Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor. "At the same time, it shows that our home-grown model of cross-sector collaboration is yielding world-class innovations to address those challenges."

-end-