

## **Movin' Up: A Helping Hand Docudrama**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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“*Movin' Up: A Helping Hand*” is a locally produced one hour docudrama about young, black women who moved to Boston from the rural South in the 1960s and 1970s for employment as domestics in upper income homes. This docudrama utilizes both the narrative storyline of the dilemma encountered by these young women, the thriving jazz scene in Boston, as well as archival material and interviews with members of the Women’s Service Club, to advance this untold piece of Boston’s history. In Boston, the Women’s Service Club, a community service organization for black women founded in 1919, run by black women, come to the aid of these young women and serves as a hostel to them, providing training, job referrals, and a supportive environment. Under the leadership of Roxbury’s well-renowned Melnea Cass, the Women’s Service Club also moved to help enact legislation to address the many inequities endured by the domestic worker, which are still on the books today.

During Women’s History Month in March, the film will be screened on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 7PM at the Cambridge Community Television’s studio, located at 675 Massachusetts Avenue, Central Square in Cambridge. The screening is co-sponsored by CCTV, the Boston Women’s Fund and the Women’s Service Club. The screening is free and open to the public.

Created over a 15-year period, the film will premiere on BNN-TV, the Boston Neighborhood Network’s cable access Channel 9 starting on Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM and Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 PM and will be subsequently repeated on the same days and time slots ending on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2007. The docudrama will premiere on CCTV, Cambridge Community Television’s cable Channel 9 starting on Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 PM and will run every Sunday until April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the same 9:00 PM

time slot. The film will also run every Friday beginning March 16<sup>th</sup> on CCTV's Channel 10 at 1:30 PM and will be repeated until April 20<sup>th</sup> 2007.

Rudy Hypolite of Stoughton, who was born in Trinidad, is producer, editor and co-director of the movie. Jose Soares of Cambridge, who was born in Portugal, is the screenwriter and co-director. Irma Askew, who recently passed away, is the playwright, plays the role of Mrs. Morris and was the driving force behind the project. Brett Mallory of Dorchester, portrays the Nightclub MC in the film, played various roles in the original stage-play, and is the nephew of Ms. Askew. Louise Kerr, former domestic worker and current president of the Women's Service Club, is the featured interviewee in the docudrama project. Lloyd Smith of Cambridge is one of the co-producers.

Among the documentary cast are: Elynor Poindexter Walcott of Wally's Café and Jazz Club, Florence Hagins formerly of Boston, now residing in Florida, and the late Alice Freeman, former president of the Women's Service Club. Among the narrative cast are: Sheri Cole Bridgeman of Teen Empowerment, who plays the role of Hilda, lead actress Regina Newton, Jim Atwood of BNN-TV, Sabby Lewis of Whitman, long time jazz pianist in Greater Boston, Trudy Goodman of Cambridge, the late actor / playwright Thomas Grimes of Roxbury and Brett Mallory of Dorchester.

In conclusion, *Movin' Up: A Helping Hand* is a hopeful, but realistic story of the journey to freedom and prosperity that thousands of Southern blacks made during the 1960s. It emphasizes the grit and determination necessary to overcome the handicaps of prejudice and ignorance. The hopes and dreams of blacks to finally enter the mainstream of American life are portrayed in the struggle of one young woman and recounted through interviews by those who experienced it.

### **Key Project Themes:**

- Women's Service Club contributions to Boston neighborhoods since 1919.
- Melnea Cass accomplishments as President of the WSC
- Story about women set during the Civil Rights Movement
- Influence of jazz music in Boston and Wally's Jazz Club's role
- History – migration of young black women from rural Southern towns to northeast cities like Boston and New York - domestics
- Legislation – domestics exploitation
- Locally produced docudrama
- Premiere on cable access stations in Boston and Cambridge