

Recording Artist MIKE-E and American Cancer Society Battle Tobacco Use with Hip-Hop

ATLANTA – March 23, 2010 – It's Hip-hop versus tobacco as Mike-E and the AfroFlow Tour begin their anti-tobacco musical tour of colleges and community events. Through a collaboration with recording artist Michael "MIKE-E" Ellison and his nationwide AfroFlow Tour, the American Cancer Society is using music to raise awareness of the health risks involved with tobacco use, and encouraging young adults to join the movement for a world with less cancer and more birthdays. The AfroFlow Tour kicks off today, March 23, with a performance at Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas.

Tobacco use is the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the U.S. Each year, cigarette smoking results in about 443,000 premature deaths. Most smokers become addicted to tobacco before they are legally old enough to buy cigarettes, and most adolescents who become regular smokers continue to smoke into adulthood. Because the likelihood of developing smoking-related cancers, such as lung cancer, increases with the duration of smoking, those who start at younger ages and continue to smoke are at highest risk for cancer and other diseases.

"The tobacco industry continues to target young adults with their marketing campaigns, so the American Cancer Society must reach them with a positive message that can save their lives," said Linda Blount, National Vice President of Health Disparities at the American Cancer Society. "By educating young people about the importance of avoiding tobacco use and staying well, we can reduce the future cancer burden, which in turn will save lives and create a world with more birthdays."

"We're very excited to embark on another tour with the American Cancer Society and bring the anti-tobacco message to communities, colleges and universities, youth and young adults," said MIKE-E. "Our live shows are an opportunity to let our audience know about the resources the American Cancer Society has to enable people fight cancer and tobacco."

Entering its fourth consecutive year, the AfroFlow Tour was developed in cooperation with the American Cancer Society's South Atlantic Division, and last year expanded to a national platform through the Society's National Home Office, Office of Health Disparities. The tour engages communities, college students, young adults and youth – through nonconventional music performances – to save lives and create a world with less cancer and more birthdays.

Major cigarette companies spend more than \$13 billion every year on advertising, including marketing their products to appeal to children and young adults. Since prohibitions were put in place in 1998 on marketing to youth under age 18, the tobacco industry has turned its marketing efforts to reaching college age young adults, ramping up advertising strategies to include magazines with a large youth audience and sponsoring college-related events, such as concerts and events at bars in college towns. The American Cancer Society hopes to combat the tobacco industry's marketing practices through efforts including the AfroFlow Tour.

Smokers who want to quit can call the American Cancer Society Quit For Life[®] Program operated and managed by Free & Clear[®] at 1-800-227-2345 for tobacco cessation and coaching services that can help increase their chances of quitting for good; or visit cancer.org/GreatAmericans for customized tips that can help with quitting smoking for good.

For more information on the afroFlow tour and schedule dates, visit www.afroflow.com.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing about \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, about 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

About AfroFlow

AfroFlow, meaning flowing from Africa, recognizes Hip-hop's indigenous cultural roots and inspirational messages. Created by "MIKE-E," the innovative, interactive live stage show promotes cancer awareness, and the prevention and cessation of tobacco use. MIKE-E's captivating presentation features the charismatic crowd-rocking DJ Invisible, dynamic multi-instrumentalist and versatile vocalist Kenny Watson, Master Drummer and percussionist Sowandé Keita, and world class Senegalese bassist and singer Pathé Jassi. Extensive grassroots community outreach is also an essential component of the AfroFlow Tour.

MIKE-E was born in Ethiopia, where he supports orphan outreach and health care programs and maintains nationwide recognition with one of the country's most popular hits "Ethiopia (Everything Will Be Alright)," Stateside, the Detroit-based lyricist is recognized for repeat performances on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, and appearing in nationally televised spoken word vignettes for the National Football League.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Busola Afolabi
American Cancer Society
Phone: 404-417-5894
Email: busola.afolabi@cancer.org**
