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WORLDWIDE DOCUMENTARIES, INC.

July 19, 1999

Ms. Sandra Thurman
White House Office of National AIDS Policy
736 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Thurman

Although we have not yet met, I feel in some ways that I already know you-- from Jonathan, from BJ, and, most importantly perhaps, from a sense of shared vision and purpose.

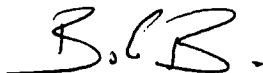
I am writing for two reasons:

First, several of us involved with a *Closer Walk*-- including BJ-- believe that this is a project you would want to know about. Our perception is that your basic mission is to educate and inform as many people as possible in this country and abroad as to the realities of the AIDS epidemic "as it is today." In keeping with this mission, *A Closer Walk* is the first and only film to provide a definitive account of mankind's confrontation with the AIDS pandemic. Its intended audience is at least 100 million people around the world, through theatrical, television, home video, and educational releases. Our thinking is that you might see this global communications project as a valuable tool, and might wish to explore ways in which we could work together, both in your present professional capacity, and in whatever way you may choose to continue working on AIDS issues in the future. As one of our advisors said to me recently-- "I think we have what Sandy needs." (*A Closer Walk* will premiere, by the way, in the Fall of 2000.)

Second, it occurred to me that you might wish to consider appearing in the film itself: either as an interview subject, or, more fully, as one of the individuals we are profiling in the film as an example of what it means to live a life of compassion, commitment, and concern in a global society. These profiles will be part of the film's matrix and tapestry, and will include, among others, Peter Piot, Graca Machel, Paul Farmer, and the first recipient of the GHC's Jonathan Mann Award, Cynthia Maung.

I will be in Washington this Thursday, and have asked BJ to see if a meeting between the two of us might be arranged. In the meanwhile, I do hope you enjoy reading the proposal. I think you will hear in it Jonathan's voice, which I mean to keep alive, and share with millions of people.

All the best,


Robert Bilheimer
President

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7706 Baptist Hill Bloomfield, New York 14469 TEL: (716) 657-5400 FAX: (716) 657-5402



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Contact: Roger Bilheimer
Roger Bilheimer Associates
(908) 233-4107

**BILL and MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION AWARDS
\$1 MILLION TO AIDS DOCUMENTARY**

A Closer Walk to Focus on Root Causes of Pandemic

**UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot says film is "critical missing link" in war
against global AIDS**

New York, NY, January 12, 2000 *A Closer Walk*, a feature-length film produced by Worldwide Documentaries about the global AIDS pandemic, has been awarded a \$1 million grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Intended for an international audience, *A Closer Walk* focuses on the root causes of AIDS by exploring the relationship between health and human rights. The film will provide a comprehensive portrayal of mankind's confrontation with the AIDS pandemic, and will underscore the fact that the globalization of AIDS threatens world security, epitomizes global interdependence, and leads to a fuller understanding of the responsibilities of planetary citizenship. Production of the film is already underway.

Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, the United Nations organization charged with tracking the progress of the disease globally, said, "Public response to AIDS, while

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sometimes heroic, has often also been characterized by ignorance and denial. *A Closer Walk* is a critical missing link in the effort to put this global health crisis in the forefront of the world's consciousness, where it belongs. HIV/AIDS is not an African problem or an Asian problem. It is a problem that belongs to each and every one of us. I am hopeful that this project will help educate and inform the public as to the extent of the AIDS crisis, its consequences, and its underlying causes-- and inspire each of us to take action to address this devastating global epidemic."

At least 35 million people, more than 90% of them in the developing world, are already infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. New infections are taking place at the rate of one every five seconds. AIDS-related deaths are occurring globally at the rate of one every 15 seconds. By the year 2005, UNAIDS predicts that more than 100 million people around the world will be HIV positive. There are 13 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

"When *A Closer Walk* came along, the Foundation really jumped at the opportunity to support it", said Rose Berg, a Gates Foundation spokesperson. "The Foundation does not believe we can make AIDS a thing of the past until there is a much broader public awareness of the toll AIDS is exacting, especially in the developing countries."

Dr. Nils Daulaire, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Global Health Council, said, "The sum of countless individuals' dignity, worth, and suffering is always greater than statistics can convey. *A Closer Walk* honors the irreplaceable humanity of each life lost to or affected by the global AIDS pandemic."

A Closer Walk was conceived in 1996 by Jonathan Mann and Robert Bilheimer. Jonathan Mann, who died in the crash of Swissair 111 on September 2, 1998, created the World Health Organization's global AIDS program, and is widely regarded as the architect and spiritual father of the global response to AIDS. Academy Award nominee

Robert Bilheimer, President of Worldwide Documentaries, is a director, writer, and producer with an international background in theatre and film.

"All of us in the "*Closer Walk*" family are deeply grateful to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for sharing our vision and affording us the opportunity to move forward on this important project," notes Bilheimer, who will produce and direct *A Closer Walk*. "Jonathan Mann said that the link between health and human rights is not an ideology, but an exploration, and that is a good way to describe this film. We want to take the audience on a journey into the world as it really is, and at the end of that journey arrive at a better understanding of what it means to be a responsible and compassionate human being in a planetary society. It's not an easy exploration-- the devastation and human suffering caused by AIDS in the developing world is almost beyond comprehension--but in the end the film will be inspiring. We can learn many things from AIDS, and one of them is how to be a better human being."

A Closer Walk will interweave profiles, human interest stories, and interviews with individuals whose backgrounds, perspectives, and areas of expertise epitomize the cross-cultural nature of the AIDS dilemma. Participants will include leading experts on the subject of global AIDS and infectious disease and public health; AIDS researchers and scientists; developing world statespeople; leaders in the fields of religion, global ethics, economics, and political science; and a range of others including journalists, business leaders, activists and health workers. Transitional sequences designed to give the film's audience an opportunity to reflect on key segments of the film will feature the work of prominent artists in the field of music, photography, theatre, and film. South African composer Caiphus Semenya, who received an Oscar nomination for his work on Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple*, will contribute to the film's musical score.

A Closer Walk is a feature-length film for theatrical and television release, with edited versions for educational and Internet applications. Filming will take place in Haiti, Brazil, South and southern Africa, East Africa, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Eastern

Europe, and various locations in the United States. Bilheimer concludes, "While *A Closer Walk* is a global document, it is neither a travelogue nor a catalogue. The past 15 years have shown us that AIDS has underlying root causes that know no boundaries. Marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination-- which in turn lead to poverty, lack of education, and social inequality-- are the societal factors upon which AIDS feeds. That is why, for instance, AIDS has consistently found its way to-- and is increasingly affecting-- poor women throughout the developing world. These women-- and there are tens of millions of them-- were robbed of their voices long before HIV appeared to further complicate their lives."

Founded in 1986, Worldwide Documentaries is a not-for-profit film production company focusing on subjects of social, cultural, and humanitarian interest. These projects have been sponsored and funded by more than 40 foundations, corporations, and philanthropic organizations around the world. These include The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Maurice Falk Medical Fund, the George Gund Foundation, the Royal S. Marks Foundation, Cadbury Trust, the Coca Cola Company, and the Xerox Corporation.

The consulting advisors for *A Closer Walk* are: Dr. James Curran, Dean, Emory School of Public Health; David Corkery, Fenton Communications; Dr. Nils Daulaire, President & CEO, Global Health Council; Dr. Ernest Drucker, Director of Public Health and Policy Research, Montefiore Medical Center; Dr. Paul Farmer, Director of the Program in Infectious Disease and Social Change at the Harvard Medical School; Dr. Gerald Friedland, Director, Yale AIDS Program; Philip B. Hallen, President Emeritus, Maurice Falk Medical Fund; Dr. Mathilde Krim, President, AmFAR; Lydia Mann; Naomi Mann; Carol Mann; Dr. June Osborn, President, Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation; Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS; Eric Sawyer, Executive Director, HIV/AIDS Human Rights Project; BJ Stiles, President Emeritus, National AIDS Fund.