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## **ONE MILLION IN ONE NIGHT IMPACTS MILLIONS WORLDWIDE**

***We Are Family Foundation Raises \$1 million at Fifth Annual Gala Celebration***

(New York, NY) April 26, 2007 – In the last five years, the **We Are Family Foundation (WAFF)** has spread the message of global peace and unity through the power of a song and national and international education-based initiatives. On Monday, April 23, 2007, WAFF hosted their Fifth Annual Gala fundraiser co-chaired by designer **Tommy Hilfiger** and **Chairman & CEO of Gibson Guitar Corp., Henry Juskiewicz**. The purpose of each year's gala is to honor extraordinary individuals dedicated to promoting a universal message of hope and betterment of the world. This year's honorees were **Paul Simon, Dionne Warwick** and **Chairman of the New York Mercantile Exchange, Richard Schaeffer**.

The fundraising event, sponsored in part by **Gibson Foundation** and **Tiffany & Co.** raised over **\$1 million** towards WAFF's initiatives that reach millions of people worldwide. WAFF has set a proactive agenda to immediately allocate those funds toward their current national and international programs which include: the "**We Are Family: A Musical Message for All**" early childhood education initiative in partnership with 17 global media companies; funding the building of new schools in Africa in partnership with **Building with Books; Mattie's Movie and Poetry Slam** in children's hospitals nationwide in partnership with **Lollipop Theater Network**; and a new innovative global youth leadership program announced that evening called **Three Dot Dash** inspired by 13-year-old best-selling poet and peacemaker **Mattie J.T. Stepanek**.

The event was filled with insightful speeches by keynote speakers: **WAFF Founder Nile Rodgers**, Tommy Hilfiger, **WAFF President Nancy Hunt**, honorees Dionne Warwick, Paul Simon and Richard Schaeffer, Henry Juskiewicz, **Jeni Stepanek (Mattie's Mom)**, **Vice Admiral Al Konetzni, Jr. (Ret.)**, in addition to support from WAFF friends and celebrities **Montel Williams, Steven Van Zandt, Tony Bennett, Katie Couric, Orlando Jones, Khaliah Ali, Sarah Jones** and **Clive Davis**. Supporters opened up their hearts and wallets to support the cause initiated by Rodgers after the tragic events of 9/11 and inspired by two key events: concerned people around the world who told him the world needed his song to start the healing process after 9/11 and from a conversation Rodgers had with **Nobel Peace Prize** winner and former South African president, **Nelson Mandela**.

According to Rodgers, "*One night my music partner Bernard Edwards and I met Nelson Mandela shortly after his release from prison in South Africa at Robert De Niro's restaurant in Tribeca. He told us the song "We Are Family" was played constantly on the radios of his white prison guards who listened to the segregated Pop radio station. The sound of the white guards singing along with a song sung by black girls about being family assured him that South Africa would not be segregated forever.*"

**About We Are Family Foundation**

The We Are Family Foundation was formed in 2002 to promote diversity, understanding, respect and the vision of a global family. The "We Are Family Project" began in response to the tragic events of September 11th. Legendary songwriter/producer **Nile Rodgers** and **Tommy Boy Music President, Tom Silverman** gathered 200 celebrities on the weekend of September 22nd to re-record Nile's world renowned hit song "We Are Family" to commence the healing process. For more information on the foundation: [www.wearefamilyfoundation.org](http://www.wearefamilyfoundation.org)