

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 2015

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MEDIA ALERT/ PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

**Annenberg Center Live Welcomes The African Children's Choir
*Young Survivors from Africa Take Center Stage March 27 at 10:30 a.m.***

WHO: The African Children's Choir features boys and girls, ages 7 to 10, who have experienced the devastation of war, famine and disease. They represent all of the children of Africa and together they demonstrate the potential of African children to become strong leaders for a better future in their land.

WHAT: Young survivors of war and famine will take the stage and fill the room with beautiful music. The African Children's Choir uses music and dance to create a new lease on life and new hope for their futures. In each performance, the children melt the hearts of audiences with their charming smiles and delightful African tunes.

WHEN: On Friday, March 27 at 10:30 a.m. And at 7:30 p.m. for general public

WHERE: Annenberg Center at 3680 Walnut Street.

WHY: The goal of the Choir is to raise awareness of the need of destitute and orphaned children in Africa and to raise funds for continued development and support of the African Children's Choir Programs. The Choir's international educational endeavor provides unique training for the children. Once choir members have completed a concert tour, they return to their homelands with the tools necessary for bettering their future.

Student Discovery

Annenberg Center Live is also hosting a special African Children's Choir performance for school children at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, March 27. For more information and to order tickets for this performance, contact Edward Epstein at [215-746-7997](tel:215-746-7997) or by email edwardme@ac.upenn.edu.

About The African Children's Choir

Since 1984, the African Children's Choir has toured the world with over 1000 participants in 38 different Choirs. Thirty years ago, Ray Barnett was on a humanitarian trip to war-torn Uganda when he gave a small boy a ride from his decimated home to the safety of another village. During the journey, the child did what he knew how to do best – he sang. That simple song of dignity and hope became the catalyst for a program that has changed the lives of thousands of children and reshaped the future of the African continent.

“When I went back to Canada and people were not very interested in Uganda, I remembered this small boy,” Barnett explained. “I knew that if only a group of these beautiful children could go to the West, people would be deeply moved and would certainly want to help.” From there the African Children's Choir was born.

Rallying support from the West, Ray coordinated the first tour of the Choir, which successfully brought the voices of 31 children of war-torn Africa to the West. The Choir raised enough funds to open the first Children's Home at Makerere. The Home provided a stable environment and a quality education for the Choir children and additional children who needed care. The success

and instant popularity of the first tour encouraged Ray to continue; and a second Choir was selected from the Children's Home, and the African Children's Choir began another tour.

The Choir's success meant that it was able to provide for many children beyond those in the Choir. Over the next few years, six more children's homes were established to care for vulnerable children, many of whom had been orphaned during the war. Additionally, the African Children's Choir established a number of special Literacy Schools in Uganda where hundreds of children learned to read and write and gained confidence and skills that ensured a brighter future.

To date over a thousand vulnerable children have been through the Choir program and the funds they have generated have provided the opportunity of education and hope for many thousands like them in some of the most desperate and needy areas of Africa.

About Annenberg Center Live

Annenberg Center Live is dedicated to the advancement of a diverse and thriving cultural community through the pursuit of excellence, innovation and intellectual engagement in the performing arts. Affirming its core belief in the power of the arts to transform lives, the Annenberg Center embraces creative expression from the past and the present, of local and global origin, to expand the worlds of all who participate. As a destination and a resource, the Annenberg Center connects and engages artists, audiences, the University of Pennsylvania and the regional community through shared experiences in its high quality venues.