



Media Release

**The Art of Life:
Charity Raises the Curtain to Artistic Performance to
Celebrate Work with Local Hospices**

Rosetta Life, a charity dedicated to working with people who have life-threatening illnesses, has been working with a number of hospitals and hospices in the West Midlands to encourage them to tell their stories and experiences through the arts. A range of innovative projects have been taking place across the region and the campaign called 'Let's Talk About Living' will mark the success of this work starting with a series of events taking place in Birmingham during June.

The campaign will culminate in a Festival in October reflecting World Palliative Care Day on October 8th 2009 and feature a conference of care specialists, a children's concert with the CBSO, a photographic exhibition and workshops involving a range of local nursing homes and hospitals.

Working in partnership with four local hospices and NHS Birmingham East and North, the charity Rosetta Life will give more than 100 hospice users the opportunity to commemorate and celebrate their lives through performances, which will be showcased at arts venues around the city.

The campaign will make Birmingham the first City to talk openly about how its citizens positively approach life as it draws to a close and how they want to be remembered.

The 'Let's Talk About Living' activity will include:

Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 4th & 5th June, 7pm. "The Magical Glow of the Co-Op" a rehearsed reading that will feature the work of two hospices; Birmingham St Mary's Hospice in Selly Park and St Giles Hospice Whittington, near Lichfield. Working together, more than 30 hospice users have generated a performance script that looks at the choices people face when dying and the difficulties they face when making these choices. The script will be performed by four professional actors from the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. It will finish with an after show discussion called 'The Big Conversation – Let's Talk About Living' where

an invited panel of hospice users, health care practitioners and the citizens of Birmingham will debate the issues raised in the performance. Members of the public are welcome to attend the free performances at the Birmingham Rep and take part in the after show discussion and debate. For further ticket information please contact the Birmingham Rep Box office on 0121 236 4455.

The celebration in June will culminate in a film premiere at one of the city's highest profile venues **The Electric Cinema, Birmingham on 29th June commencing at 5.30pm.** The Screening of 'Night and Day' will show the story of six families from the region who are living with life-threatening illnesses. Directed by Chris Rawlence, who directed the acclaimed seven part BBC 2 series 'The Mind Traveller', the film offers a voice to those whom illness and society has silenced and shows how a terminal diagnosis need not be a death sentence.

A Reception will also follow the screening including the official launch of the "Big Conversation- Let's Talk About Living" at the Radisson SAS Hotel in Birmingham.

Speaking about the charity's important work in Birmingham, Lucinda Jarrett, Artistic Director at Rosetta Life comments:

"It is a great privilege to be able to stage these celebratory events in Birmingham which will enable more than 100 hospice users from across the region to have their voices heard through the celebration of their stories using the mediums of both performance and film. Importantly this activity also represents an exciting opportunity to build bridges between the City of Birmingham, its leading arts organisations and the palliative care communities. We hope our campaign, Let's Talk About Living, supports a change in the way people think about living with dying and acknowledges the heroism at the heart of each individual who is struggling with life terminal illness."

Kate Palmer, Day Hospice Manager from St. Mary's Hospice in Birmingham who managed the drama production within the Hospice said;

Insert quote.

Speaking of the success of this first stage of the project, Melanie Young, Senior Commissioner, End of Life Care from NHS Birmingham East and North comments:

"Our partnership with Rosetta Life plays a key role in the palliative care service we provide, enabling hospice users to artistic creativity to give voice to their diverse experiences. Like Rosetta Life, we believe it is vitally important that those living with life-limiting illness remain active in their communities and that their voices are heard. This has been a great opportunity

to give voice to the feelings and thoughts of so many people facing challenging and difficult times.”

-ends-

Note to editors.

Since launching ten years ago Rosetta Life has worked with more than 13,000 hospice users across the UK. The charity has also gained the support of several well known artists who have worked alongside hospice users to help them express their own stories through a host of creative forums include song, dance, theatre and photography.

Recent stars to contribute to Rosetta Life projects across the UK have included musician Jarvis Cocker, voice coaches, Carrie and David Grant, composer Orlando Gough and Billy Bragg – whose work with Rosetta Life accumulated in worldwide exposure thanks to the top ten hit ‘We Laughed’ which was written by hospice user Maxine Edgington and put to the music of Billy Bragg which featured in the UK charts.

Rosetta Life’s celebratory work is set to continue across the City with further artistic events also due to be staged in October to celebrate World Palliative Care Day (October 8th 2009). Activity will include a concert in partnership with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Other activity will include dance collaborations at the Birmingham Hippodrome, a photography exhibition at Birmingham’s Ikon Gallery and a conference for palliative care and health professionals at the Patrick Centre in the Birmingham Hippodrome complex.

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