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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Local teens raise awareness of rare disease; hope to break Guinness World Record**

SILVER SPRING, MD—12/2/08—This holiday season, shoppers in downtown Silver Spring will be sporting an unorthodox look: blue lips. But it won't be because of the cold weather, and they're not on the cutting edge of a new fashion trend. They're part of a global campaign to set a Guinness World Record and, in the process, raise awareness of pulmonary hypertension (PH), a little-known, life-threatening disease.

Blue lips, or cyanosis, can be a sign that a person has PH, which is caused by continuous high blood pressure in the pulmonary artery in the lungs, resulting in an enlarged heart which can lose its ability to pump.

On Wednesday, December 3rd from 3:00pm-7:00pm students from Montgomery Blair and Northwood High Schools in Silver Spring, MD will team up with the Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) to raise awareness of PH with the "Pucker Up 4 PH" campaign. The teenagers will work with PH patients, other volunteers and PHA staff to share information about pulmonary hypertension with the public while gathering their blue lip prints on postcards. Their goal is to help the PHA in the United Kingdom (PHA-UK) collect 40,000 "kisses"—a world record for the largest collection of lip prints ever assembled. The Pucker UP 4 PH table will be set up by the holiday display right off of Ellsworth Dr. in Downtown Silver Spring.

The Pucker Up 4 PH Campaign, organized by the PHA in the United Kingdom (PHA-UK) is part of an international effort among the 47 PH associations in countries around the world to raise awareness of PH.

Debbie Castro is the Director of Volunteer Services at PHA in Silver Spring, and her sister, Alex Flipse, is a local PH patient. Debbie has been working with Montgomery Blair and Northwood High students on PHA volunteer projects since the summer, and she continues to be impressed by how dedicated they are to the cause. "Our local high school volunteers are bringing a lot of energy and people-power to this global-scale awareness raiser," she says. "We couldn't do it without them."

Debbie Castro will be available to the media between 3:00pm and 7:00pm, and Alex Flipse will be available from 7:00pm to 9:00pm on the day of the event.

Pulmonary hypertension is a debilitating, life-threatening illness. PH is often misdiagnosed, causing many people to lose valuable treatment time and leading to a poor prognosis. It can affect small children and the elderly, but most often it strikes young women in the prime of their lives. There is no cure for PH, but many recent research advances are providing hope.