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***GirlsAllowed Web Site Features New Episodes for National Mental Health Month
Award-winning Online Destination Helps Adolescent and Teen
Girls Focus On Recognizing And Coping With Depression***

Bloomington, IL (May 4, 2004) — The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (CAEPV) will launch two new episodes on its award-winning *GirlsAllowed* Web site for adolescent and teen girls (www.girlsallowed.org) to coincide with National Mental Health Month and Childhood Depression Awareness Day. The “Hurting Inside” series will debut May 4th and will focus on recognizing and coping with depression in teens.

“We know that increased risk of depression is a consequence of partner abuse for adults, and research suggests that depression is an influential factor in violent intimate relationships for teens as well,” said Kim Wells, CAEPV Executive Director. “The new *GirlsAllowed* episodes and activities will help young girls, their parents, and educators better understand and recognize signs of depression and how this serious health issue impacts emotions, thoughts and actions.”

Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Ph.D., Director of the Women’s Programs Office and Associate Executive Director of the Public Interest Directorate for the American Psychological Association stated, “Statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health indicate that more than 8% of adolescents suffer from clinical depression each year, and at the onset of puberty, girls become at greater risk than boys. Education initiatives like *GirlsAllowed* are vitally important because they can spur much needed recognition, early treatment and compassion for depression sufferers.”

CAEPV member company CIGNA, one of the nation’s largest employee benefits companies, sponsored the two new web episodes or “webisodes” of *GirlsAllowed*.

Said Richard M. Conforto, Ph.D., Director of National Accounts for CIGNA Behavioral Health, “Depression and related illnesses are often misunderstood and overlooked, especially within the context of the normal yet dramatic developmental changes that occur in adolescent girls. That’s why CIGNA is proud to sponsor these new *GirlsAllowed* episodes, which provide a fun educational vehicle to enlighten others on this important and timely issue.”

GirlsAllowed.org was launched in 2002 by CAEPV and offers more than 70 interactive webisodes on issues affecting adolescent and teen girls. Young girls learn about healthy relationships as they follow the virtual life of Anni, an original 3D animated character and the star of *GirlsAllowed*. Activities for girls, discussion ideas for parents and lesson starters for educators accompany each of the original webisodes. *GirlsAllowed.org* was the 2003 recipient of the SXSW “Best Grrrl Site” award.

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence is a not-for-profit organization of corporations committed to ending partner violence through education (www.caepv.org). Established in 1995, CAEPV has more than 120 members and affiliates.

National Mental Health Month was initiated more than 50 years ago and has helped improve the health and lives of millions of Americans. Childhood Depression Awareness Day was established in 1997 by the mother of a young depression sufferer. Childhood Depression Awareness Day underscores that depression and other mental health problems in young people are real, common and treatable.

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