

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vonda Paige
267.879.1450
vp Paige@tivistalks.com

Tavis Smiley Brings 200 Youth Together For Leadership Institute *Participating Speakers Include Dr. Cornel West, Hill Harper and Lalah Hathaway*

LOS ANGELES, CA (August 11, 2008) – More than 200 youth representing 28 states will join Tavis Smiley, Dr. Cornel West, Hill Harper and Lalah Hathaway for five days of leadership training, community service, youth advocacy, education and engagement at the Tavis Smiley Foundation's 2008 Leadership Institute.

The annual conference themed, **THINK**, will be held Aug. 14-18 on the campus of the University of Los Angeles – California (UCLA). The youth delegates, ages 13-18, were selected based on their academic achievement, demonstrated and potential leadership, an essay and letter of recommendation. A key component of the Institute is the foundation's 13-member National Youth Advisory Council. These teen alumni help design and run the Institute.

"We have selected some of the best and brightest young leaders that America has to offer and during the five days of the conference we will challenge them to THINK about the world around them and how they can become the next generation of leaders," said Smiley.

The purpose of the Leadership Institute is to train young people for leadership through action-oriented workshops, plenary sessions and interactive activities. The delegates selected already have accumulated more than 8,000 volunteer service hours in their schools and communities.

Smiley will moderate a teen town hall meeting on Friday, August 15 on the topic of juvenile justice. Panelists will include Princeton University professors Dr. Cornel West and Eddie Glaude as well as Connie Rice of The Advancement project. Youth delegates Brianna Holmes of Culver City, CA; Tyler Jackson of Baltimore, MD; and Phylicia Lofton of Moreno Valley, CA were selected to be part of the panel.

Music superstar Lalah Hathaway will participate in a special session for young women aimed at increasing their awareness about breast cancer and self-esteem. Hathaway is an ambassador for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure's Campaign, Circle of Promise, whose mission is to educate African American women about early detection of breast cancer in their own circle of friends.

Actor and best-selling author Hill Harper will engage the young women in a discussion on his latest book that explores issues facing young women. Harper will share excerpts from *Letters to a Young Sister: DeFine Your Destiny*.

Through workshops, panel discussions and interactive activities, the delegates will learn to assess their strengths and weaknesses, review models of leadership, set goals, discuss and debate issues and create action plans to address issues important to youth.

Entrepreneurs Myles Kovacs, founder of DUBs magazine, Ephren Taylor, the 25-year-old chief executive office of City Capital and 17-year-old Jasmine Lawrence, the founder of EDEN Body works will participate in a panel discussion on goal setting.

SCHEDULE OF KEY EVENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15

- 3 PM Young entrepreneurs panel featuring Ephren Taylor, Myles Kovacs and Jasmine Lawrence – DeNeve Plaza
- 7 PM Teen Town Hall Meeting Moderated by Tavis Smiley – DeNeve Plaza
Panelists: Dr. Cornel West, Eddie Glaude, Princeton University professor; Connie Rice, Tyler Jackson, Brianna Holmes

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

- 9 AM *What I Know for Sure* Lecture and Book Signing w/ Tavis Smiley - DeNeve Plaza
- 10 AM Leadership & Service – Cornel West – DeNeve Plaza
- 1 PM The Great Debate – Student teams participate in a debate – DeNeve Plaza

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

- 9 AM Girl Power: Messages for Young Sisters with Lalah Hathaway
- 10:45 AM Letters to a Young Sister: DeFINE Your Destiny with Hill Harper
- 1:30 PM Community Service Beach Clean Up Project at Santa Monica Beach 1550 Pacific Coast Highway
- 7 PM Closing Banquet & Awards Ceremony – Grand Horizons Ballroom

EDITORS NOTE: Media should report to the first floor lobby of the DeNeve Plaza Building for credentials and check-in. The address is 351 Charles E. Young Drive West, Los Angeles, CA 90024

About the Tavis Smiley Foundation

The Tavis Smiley Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 1999 by Tavis Smiley to enlighten, encourage, and empower youth by providing leadership skills that will promote and enhance the quality of life for their lives, their community and the world. Since its inception, more than 6,000 youth have participated in the foundation's leadership workshops and conferences. The foundation is based in Los Angeles. For more information, visit www.youthtoleaders.org.