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SAMHSA showcases behavioral health advocates and community leaders in recovery at 2012 Voice Awards

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LOS ANGELES, Aug. 22, 2012 -- *Federal program recognizes community, sports, TV, and film industry leaders who raise awareness about recovery and promote understanding of mental and substance use disorders*

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 22, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Metta World Peace of the Los Angeles Lakers is receiving a special recognition award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for his work to raise awareness about mental health issues and for his financial support of nonprofit organizations that provide mental health awareness and treatment services for children.

SAMHSA will also recognize screenwriter and producer Shonda Rhimes with a career achievement award for her ongoing efforts to educate television audiences about the real experiences of people with behavioral health problems and those impacted by trauma.

The presentations will take place at the 2012 Voice Awards ceremony. The Voice Awards are a collaborative effort of SAMHSA and members of the entertainment industry and the behavioral health community. Hosted by David Shore, writer, producer, and creator of the Fox Network's critically acclaimed series "House M.D.," the event will take place at Paramount Studios. Now in its seventh year, the Voice Awards convenes representatives from the entertainment industry and the behavioral health community for an evening of education and awareness about the societal contributions of people living with behavioral health problems. This year, SAMHSA will highlight stories of mental illness and substance abuse, with a special focus on the behavioral health challenges of athletes, their resilience, and their paths to recovery.

"SAMHSA is grateful to Metta World Peace and all of the consumer and peer leaders being honored at the 2012 Voice Awards. Their stories of hope, resilience and selfless leadership are critical to helping others find their paths to recovery and wellness," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. "SAMHSA is also pleased to honor Shonda Rhimes and other leaders in the entertainment industry for featuring the strength, bravery and resilience of people living with mental and/or substance use disorders. The remarkable productions being recognized tonight have helped advance the public's understanding of recovery and the real experiences of people with behavioral health problems."

The 2012 Voice Awards entertainment winners are:

Television Category

- "Castle" (ABC) for the episode "Kill Shot," addressing resilience, peer support, and recovery from trauma;

- "Glee" (Fox) for the episode "On My Way," addressing suicide prevention, resilience, and recovery from trauma;
- "Homeland" (Showtime) for the episode "The Vest," addressing mental illness, peer support, and recovery;
- "Law & Order: SVU" (NBC) for the episode "Personal Fouls," addressing resilience and recovery from trauma;
- "Necessary Roughness" (USA) for a series of episodes addressing behavioral health issues and recovery; and
- "Parenthood" (NBC) for a storyline addressing substance abuse, family support, and recovery.

Film Category

- "Take Shelter" for addressing mental illness, family support, and recovery.

Documentary Category

- "Bob and the Monster" for addressing substance abuse, peer support, and recovery;
- "Demi Lovato: Stay Strong" for addressing behavioral health issues, resilience, and recovery; and
- "Unguarded" (ESPN) for addressing substance abuse, resilience, and recovery.

SAMHSA's Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to William "Bill" White of Bloomington–Normal, Ill., for his leadership, research, and advocacy to promote recovery from addictions. White has worked in the addictions field for more than 40 years and has also authored or co-authored more than 450 articles, monographs, research reports, book chapters, as well as 16 books.

Consumer/peer leadership awards will be presented to Henry Acosta, Plainsboro, N.J., and Shery Mead, Plainfield, N.H., as well as advocates and athletes Chris Herren, Portsmouth, R.I.; Chamique Holdsclaw, Atlanta; and Brandon Marshall, Chicago. Brittany Holt of Greensboro, N.C., will be presented with the Young Adult Leadership Award. These individuals will be honored for sharing their stories of recovery and working to promote the social inclusion of people with mental and/or substance use disorders. Through their exemplary leadership and advocacy, they demonstrate that recovery is real and that people with behavioral health problems are valuable, contributing members of their schools, workplaces, and communities.

For a complete list of partner organizations involved in this effort, visit www.voiceawards.samhsa.gov.

To join the conversation about the Voice Awards, like SAMHSA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/samhsa and follow @samhsagov and #VoiceAwards on Twitter.

SAMHSA is a public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

SOURCE Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)