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**SPARKS FLY, STEREOTYPES FADE, WHEN WORLDLINK TV PUTS AMERICAN
TEENAGERS AND ARAB TEENS “FACE TO FACE”**

Milestone TV Documentary Will Air on November 30.

(San Francisco, November 13, 2002) – “Suicide bombings are not violence; they are resistance against violence.” This impassioned statement was made by Mohammed, a 17-year-old Jordanian Muslim, to four San Francisco teenagers, 7,000 miles distant, but light years away in day-to-day experience.

The conversation is part of a groundbreaking television documentary featuring a live digital satellite link between four students at San Francisco’s Lowell High School and four Arab high school students in Amman, Jordan. The original one-hour production by San Francisco’s WorldLink TV is the first youth dialogue of its kind to hit American TV screens. *Face to Face—Young Arabs and Americans* will premiere nationally on WorldLink November 30 at 7:00 p.m. PST, and can be viewed on satellite channels DIRECTV Channel 375 or DISH Network 9410.

On November 13 a preview of the program was held at San Francisco’s Lowell High for educators, city officials, the entire Lowell student body, and the press. On that same day the film was screened for the first time at the Arab National School in Amman. About 900 students at Lowell and more than 1,000 in Amman viewed the premiere and discussed its message and implications in Town Hall meetings.

Stephen Olsson, WorldLink’s director of original programming, calls the program “a unique meeting of cultures, hearts and minds.”

“Four young Americans, two girls and two boys, meet electronically with their counterparts from an Arab culture perceived as hostile to ours. The conversation ranges from political disagreements through cultural stereotypes and misperceptions, interracial dating, drugs, the Intifada, teen suicide bombers, Martin Luther King, the bias of the media, and U.S. support for Israel. Although they agree on much, they remain worlds apart on issues like suicide bombings. Since most of the perpetrators and the victims of suicide bombings have been young people, it is fascinating and inspiring to see teens from both cultures grappling with this issue.”

The players in this drama are articulate, honest and candid about the political and social factors contributing to the tragic Middle East stalemate. You can see the tears welling in the eyes of Julia, a Jewish-American girl when Farah, a Jordanian Muslim, suggests that all American media are controlled by Jewish interests; when Chinese-American Dennis asks Mohammed, a Jordanian Muslim, “How can you claim to respect both Martin Luther King, who rejected violence, and Palestinian suicide bombers?” the response is baffled and awkward; When Farah comments “The only Americans I ever met thought we all ride camels and live in tents,” all eight break up with teen-age laughter; but the mood turns somber when Hassan, an Arab-American boy with a Palestinian father and a Jewish mother, points out that bombing of innocent Israeli civilians can only make Israel more intransigent.

Despite their differences, both groups agree that solutions to the Middle East stalemate and improved Arab-American relations are urgently needed, and communications and greater understanding among young people is one sure route to that goal.

Following the live link, the four Jordanians return to their native Arabic (now sub-titled in English) to review their experience:

Jahed: “Usually Americans don’t support us, so it was a surprise that they agreed with us on so much.”

Farah: “They agreed on everything except suicide bombers.... of course, not all Americans are like this.... but it changed some of my preconceptions. For example, I thought all young Americans took drugs, but they don’t.”

The Americans also reflected on the experience:

Hassan: “The experience made me feel more like an American, made me realize that I am accountable for my country’s actions.”

Rene: “When I realized that the four of us—Hispanic, Chinese, Jewish and Arab-Americans—were the face of America for them, it made me proud and happy.”

But perhaps the most eloquent interpretation came from Jordanian Nasma, who said, “They will spread the message, that we are good people, that we are civilized, that we are not terrorists.”

Face to Face—Young Arabs and Americans will be broadcast on WorldLink TV (DIRECTV channel 375 and DISH Network channel 9410) several times during December, and will be available to some PBS stations and to schools and universities in the U.S. and elsewhere. The program is produced and directed by Stephen Olsson. Daoud Kuttab, Rama Kayyali and Lorraine Hess-Seymour are co-producers. The editor is Matt DeVries. Kim Spencer, president of WorldLink TV, is Executive Producer.

WorldLink TV (www.worldlinktv.org) is a non-profit satellite network based in San Francisco that brings unfiltered global news to U.S. satellite subscribers. Its daily MOSAIC show brings in news reports from more than 22 Arab nations, providing viewers, journalists, and political analysts a perspective that is not available in other American media. In addition to its enhanced coverage of the Middle East and Iraq, WorldLink broadcasts news and documentaries from all regions of the globe, and offers the largest collection of world music videos on the air.

For more information go to <http://www.worldlinktv.com/press/index.shtml> or email press@worldlinktv.org.

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