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**iDREAM for Racial Health Equity Announces Winner
for its First Annual S.M.A.R.T. Moms Award**

*Award Honors Student Mothers who Successfully Balance Self-Care, Work and
Family Life while Continuing Higher Education*

LOS ANGELES – (May 14, 2013) - In recognition of National Women's Health Week, iDREAM for Racial Health Equity, a project of Community Partners, announced the winner for its First Annual S.M.A.R.T. Moms Award (Student Mothers Achieving Rightful Tribute).

The S.M.A.R.T. Moms Award honors student mothers who embody strength and courage by balancing self-care, work and family life while pursuing higher education. She also has a clear vision for her future and is a role model to her children.

With more than 20 nominations submitted, the winner and top finalists for the iDream S.M.A.R.T. Mom Award are as follows:

1st Place: Valerie Brookins, University of Southern California

2nd Place: Sequoia Phillips, Compton Community College

3rd Place: (Tie): Kubie Edelen, CSU San Bernardino

3rd Place: (Tie): Kenia N. Alcaraz, CSU Northridge

Winner Valerie Brookins had two daughters under 5 years old when she enrolled in school; she learned she was pregnant with her third soon after. Despite mothering her two girls and staying healthy for the baby she was carrying, she persevered and earned her Bachelor's Degree in Human Development. After completing her undergraduate degree, Valerie adopted her 2-year-old nephew, Zaire.

Today, Valerie and her beautiful daughters, Faith, (8 years old), Hope (7 years old) and Charity (2 years old), and newly added Zaire are thriving. Even now with a husband and four young children, Valerie has not postponed her goals. She is in her first semester at USC studying for her Masters of Teaching. She has plans to open her own school.

As a student mother attending the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1974, iDREAM founder and executive director, Wenonah Valentine, established the S.M.A.R.T. Mom award to honor the sacrifices and perseverance exhibited by student

mothers as they strive to secure a better life for themselves and their children. Today, she guides the next generation of community health advocates and millennial leaders, to address health disparities for mothers and babies throughout the lifespan.

The S.M.A.R.T. Mom recognition is part of the 14th annual National Women's Health Week, coordinated by the [Office on Women's Health](#), within the [Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health](#) at the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

Last week, the judges identified 11 finalists who scored above 100 points. You can read their nominations online at www.idreamnow.org. The winner and finalists will participate in a public celebration that will recognize their achievements in June. The women will also be invited to participate in a Vision Board Playshop to help unlock dreams for wellness and living in good health.

This award was made possible by the generous support of National Women's Health Week, GE African American Forum, California Black Health Network, Keck Medical Center of USC and Mocha Moms, Los Angeles Chapter.

For more information about the S.M.A.R.T. Mom Awards or to learn about iDREAM, please visit www.idreamnow.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/iDreamnow.

About iDREAM for Racial Health Equity, a Project of Community Partners

iDREAM for Racial Health Equity, a project of Community Partners celebrates a rich 19-year history as a dynamic change agent for African-American families predisposed to preterm births, low birth weight and infant mortality. The organization is a leadership, training and advocacy development network dedicated to equipping a pipeline of millennial and community health advocate leaders to address the complex health issues impacting mothers and babies throughout the life course. To learn more, visit www.idreamnow.org.

About National Women's Health Week

National Women's Health Week is a nationwide initiative that calls attention to the importance of women's health. During the week, families, health organizations, businesses, communities, the government, and individuals come together to raise awareness about women's health and promote simple action steps for longer, healthier, happier lives.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Ayn Allen
iDream for Racial Health Equity
aallen@idreamnow.org
310-625-5195