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ARCW Kicks-Off 30th Anniversary Year with One-of-a-Kind Performing Arts Event

MILWAUKEE... In celebration of the start of its 30th anniversary, volunteers supporting the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin are producing a one-of-a-kind celebration to be held August 22nd at the Sharon Lynn Wilson Center for the Arts. The production, titled ***Life Performance: Acts Against AIDS***, starts at 5:30 pm and will feature a collection of performing artists together on stage in a truly unique recognition of ARCW and its 30 year history leading the fight against AIDS in Wisconsin, and nationally.

Organizing efforts for ***Life Performance: Acts Against AIDS*** are being led by Dr. Sharon A. Hansen and John R. Paradowski. Dr. Hansen is Professor Emerita of Conducting and Choral Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Hansen and also Founder and Music Director Emerita of the Milwaukee Choral Artists. Mr. Paradowski is the Minister of Music/Organist at St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, where he oversees a wide range of musical activities including multiple graded choir programs, worship planning, and a concert series. He has performed as organist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Concord Chamber Orchestra and with Milwaukee Choral Artists.

Featuring appearances by Valarie Harmon and Davit Hovhannisyann of the Milwaukee Ballet (artists appear by kind permission of the Milwaukee Ballet, Artistic Director Michael Pink); The Milwaukee Chamber Theater's Norman Moses; First Stage Children's Theater; Leslie Fitzwater, Mezzo Soprano; Kurt Ollmann, Baritone and Jeffrey Peterson and Paula Foley Tillen on piano, this evening-length concert will be a one-of-a-kind evening kicking off a year-long ARCW 30th anniversary celebration. ARCW was founded on August 23, 1985.

One of the keynote features of the evening will include performances from the "One Voice Community Choir," a special community choral ensemble of talented volunteers from throughout the city.

"The evening will be divided up into different acts that acknowledge the various phases of the AIDS epidemic, from its darkest days to the challenge and the promise of today," said Dr. Hansen. "I can't tell you how honored we are by the response we have received from the other participating arts organizations. We are thrilled to present this evening as a way to raise additional funds for ARCW."

"When you attend ARCW events you are often left wanting to do something to help either raise awareness or funds for ARCW," said Mr. Paradowski. "A while ago, Sharon and I discussed what we could do for ARCW. As musicians, we came up with the idea of presenting a community choral concert,

the type where audience members would bring a can of food or make a free-will donation in support of the ARCW. Over a series of moments throughout the past year and a half, that "little" concert has evolved into this wonderful performance."

"Sharon, John, and all the performers are volunteering their efforts, representing a significant contribution to help us celebrate our 30th anniversary," said ARCW President and Chief Executive officer Mike Gifford. "The cooperation and partnership from Milwaukee's performing arts community in creating this special evening is unprecedented for ARCW. We are grateful to them and eagerly anticipating the performances that will commemorate and celebrate what the fight against AIDS in Wisconsin has been about."

Tickets are available online at <http://ticketing.wilson-center.com/> or by calling 262-781-9470. Attendees will be treated to a post-performance reception at the theater.

Over the past 30 years, ARCW has grown into one of the nation's leading AIDS service organizations, and is now home to the ARCW Medical Center - Wisconsin's largest and fastest growing HIV health care system. Through its integrated medical, dental and mental health clinics along with its pharmacy and dedicated social services that include food pantries, housing support, a legal program, and social work case management, 3,000 HIV patients in Wisconsin gain the health care and social services they need for long-term survival with HIV disease from ARCW.

ARCW is also a leading provider of innovative and aggressive prevention services to help at-risk individuals stay free of HIV.

The ARCW Medical Center is the first HIV-dedicated medical home in the United States designated by the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the first community-based health care clinic in Wisconsin to gain official recognition by the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) for its commitment to high quality medical care. The recognition specifies the ARCW Medical Center as a patient-centered medical home for its HIV medical patients.

"CMS and NCQA recognition of the ARCW Medical Center are an affirmation of the unique and high quality integrated health and social services that we provide to our patients," ARCW President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Gifford said. "Medical homes are quickly becoming the gold standard in health care to assure that patient needs are comprehensively addressed and that care is closely coordinated to help assure the best clinical outcomes."

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