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CONTACT: Karin Pouw
(323) 960-3500
mediarelations@churchofscientology.net

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**Meet a Scientologist—Cheryl Duncan, Using PR and Publicity to
Make a Difference**

Entertainment publicity is no ordinary profession, but then entertainment publicist and Scientologist Cheryl Duncan is no ordinary person. Her video is one of 200 "Meet a Scientologist" videos available on the Scientology website at www.Scientology.org.

Sometimes, a sense of humor is all that keeps you sane.

Cheryl Duncan, a 25-year veteran entertainment publicist, has learned to take it all in stride.

Duncan, featured in a "Meet a Scientologist" video on www.Scientology.org, points out that those who prefer sane, simple, predictable work should cast their eyes elsewhere. But for those who thrive on thinking on their feet, turning last minute changes into clients'

lucky breaks, and bringing worthy causes the attention they deserve, PR is a prescription for an exciting and challenging life.

Typical of the kind of circumstance that makes her life exciting was the time in January 2011 when Duncan traded a night's sleep on the eve of an important business trip to help a friend who was battling the establishment and the elements in the middle of a New York blizzard.

"I have a terrible habit of looking at my BlackBerry when I'm already in bed," says Duncan. "I was scrambling to get out of town and had just laid my head on the pillow when I decided to check one last time—and it was a good thing I did. One of my best friends was stranded on a New York City subway in the middle of the night in a blizzard. Her train was rerouted from Manhattan to Coney Island in Brooklyn. She was resigned to spending an uncomfortable if safe night aboard the train. Suddenly, authorities were trying to kick her and 100 fellow passengers out of the subway car. No buses or cabs were running—there was no way to get home or find shelter. 'I feel like calling the media,' she texted me."

"Well, I can do *that*," Duncan texted back.

Duncan got out of bed and sent out a note that the Metropolitan Transit Authority was throwing travelers out into the blizzard. With TV media interviewing her friend by cell phone, the MTA quickly shifted in their tracks and permitted the passengers to wait out the storm on a train parked at the station. Admitting the error of their ways, the MTA issued the following statement: "It's clear that we could have done a better job

communicating with customers... and making them comfortable in the terminal until service was restored.” And it is unlikely MTA officials will soon forget the lesson they learned that night, with the story carried by CNN, the local Fox TV affiliate, the New York Post and syndicated through Associated Press all the way to China.

Duncan decided to specialize in entertainment publicity after reading what Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote about the arts: “A culture is only as great as its dreams and its dreams are dreamed by artists.”

“This got me thinking about artists—the ones who understand they have a deeper calling (as opposed to those only trying to make a fast buck) really *do* lift the culture. Even when portraying something bad, they are pointing out a condition that needs to be changed. People who say artists should stay out of social issues don’t know that’s what an artist’s purpose *is*,” she says.

Duncan has handled publicity for a wide spectrum of individuals, groups and causes, from the New York African Film Festival at Lincoln Center to the comeback of centenarian Ziegfeld Girl Doris Eaton Travis; the Korean Sejong string ensemble fundraiser hosted by Paula Zahn at Carnegie Hall; the annual New York Korean Parade and Festival; and the Congressional Black Caucus State of the African American Male Conference.

She has also been known to drop everything in support of a worthy cause, such as the night in January 2010 when she cancelled all appointments to make a two-day trip to post-earthquake Haiti to host a Haitian celebrity

traveling to Port-au-Prince aboard a Scientology-sponsored medical relief flight.

Duncan credits Scientology with giving her the tools to contend successfully with the hectic and unpredictable nature of the career she loves. Above all, it is the certainty she has gained about herself and her abilities that makes this lifestyle work for her.

"What Scientology has given me most is *me*," says Duncan. "A lot of times earlier in life I was kind of trying to fit into what I should be as a Black person, what I should be as a woman, what I should be as a young person. Now I actually have just *me*. I *like* me—it is a much more powerful position to be in."

View the Cheryl Duncan video at www.Scientology.org.

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch

its own YouTube Video Channel. The [Official Scientology YouTube Channel](#) has now been viewed by millions of visitors.



Scientologist and celebrity publicist Cheryl Duncan



Cheryl Duncan in Haiti with the Scientology Disaster Relief Team in January 2010