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## **For Grace Hosts 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women in Pain Conference and Live Webcast: “Accepting Pain: Our New Normal”**

*The Sept. 12 conference will aid, comfort and empower women challenged by chronic pain, emphasizing acceptance, behavioral therapies and exploring “The Chronic Pain Hero’s Journey” as a path to better wellness and pain management*

LOS ANGELES (August 7, 2014) – For Grace will host its **7th Annual Women In Pain Conference** on Sept. 12 at the California Endowment’s Center for Healthy Communities in downtown Los Angeles and via live webcast. The conference will bring together hundreds of women in pain and their caregivers along with leaders in pain management and advocacy to explore chronic pain and how accepting one’s “new normal” will improve well-being.

Five CEUs will be available for Registered Nurses in attendance, and the event will be open to all via a live worldwide webcast.

For more information and to register, please visit: <http://www.forgrace.org/women/in/pain/C271>.

The conference will feature presentations from distinguished pain psychologists, pain advocacy leaders and wellness practitioners who will focus on helping women in pain and their caregivers explore how accepting their “new normal” as a person with chronic pain can positively affect their pain control and overall wellness. Also, perception of one’s pain will be examined by way of behavioral therapies (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, etc.) as well as promoting the healing path of the Chronic Pain Hero’s journey.

Living with chronic pain – whether it stems from fibromyalgia, arthritis, back pain, or some other condition – challenges every facet of an individual’s life. How one perceives their day-to-day challenges can be the difference between a successful integration of chronic pain into a productive, contented experience – or a descent into depression, isolation, substance abuse and worse.

This year’s conference theme, “Accepting Pain: Our New Normal” will inspire women in pain and their caregivers to take a fresh, affirming view when it comes to their relationship with chronic pain – and embrace their day-to-day challenge as a transformative journey from victim to hero.

“Women taking on the everyday trauma of chronic pain are heroes”, says Cynthia Toussaint, founder and spokesperson of For Grace, herself a 32-year sufferer of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome and Fibromyalgia. “Make no mistake; it’s a tough journey full of pitfalls and missteps. But so much of the battle is won, or not, depending on how we perceive our chronic pain experience. It certainly can be one of transformative triumph and growth.”

According to a 2011 report from the Institute of Medicine, more than 100 million people in the United States suffer from pain every day. The latest research shows that women are more likely to suffer from chronic pain than men, and the pain can come more frequently and hit with greater intensity.

The one-day conference will kick-off at 9 am on Sept. 12 with a behavioral therapy presentation by pain psychologist **Dr. John Sorrell**. Woman in Pain **Jennifer Hughes** will follow with an exploration of the “Chronic Pain Hero’s Journey” which depicts a positive narrative spin on the pain experience. The morning program will wrap with **Mackenzie Bearup**, woman in pain and CNN Hero, sharing her inspiring story of transformation from pain sufferer to founder of a successful nonprofit that serves underprivileged children across the country.

The afternoon program will commence with an inter-active session utilizing art, story-telling and Native American culture to intimately explore the Chronic Pain Hero’s journey and will close with a panel of women in pain advocates sharing how their acceptance of chronic pain provoked personal growth and success. Additional conference activities include “Play Breaks” and creative art presentations by women in pain, featuring a photo essay by **Dana Gambill** and an award-winning art gallery by **Radene Marie Cook**. Also, Toussaint will debut a vocal performance of *To Sir, With Love* which expresses thanks to those who have mentored women in pain.

The 2014 “Patron of Women’s Rights” Award will be presented to former Los Angeles City Controller and Councilperson **Wendy Greuel**. Another highlight will be the unveiling of results from a For Grace/National Pain Report sponsored women in pain survey.

Confirmed speakers and panelists include:

**Mackenzie Bearup** – Woman In Pain, CNN Hero & Founder, Sheltering Books, Inc

**Radene Marie Cook** – Woman in Pain & Co-Leader, Intractable Pain Patients United

**Ed Coghlan** – CEO, National Pain Report

**Caroline Craven** – Woman In Pain & Founder, GirlwithMS.org

**Arlene Grau** – Woman In Pain & Guest Columnist, National Pain Report

**Jennifer Hughes** – Woman In Pain & Website Development and Marketing Consultant

**Mindy Meyer** – Woman In Pain & Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSU-Sacramento

**Maddie Ruud** – Woman In Pain & Blogger, Ruud Awakenings

**Dr. John Sorrell** – Pain Psychologist, formerly of Stanford University’s Pain Management Department

**Cynthia Toussaint** – Woman In Pain & Founder/Spokesperson, For Grace

### **About For Grace**

Founded in 2002, For Grace is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization whose mission is dedicated to improving the care and wellness of women in pain. For Grace has educated, supported and empowered thousands of women in pain through the use of public advocacy, legislative outreach and mass media.

For more information, please visit For Grace online at [www.forgrace.org](http://www.forgrace.org).

*Reporters seeking to attend the 7th Annual Women in Pain Conference are advised to contact For Grace Director John Garrett at 818.760.7635 or [jgarrett@forgrace.org](mailto:jgarrett@forgrace.org).*