

For Immediate Release

BETH BIRD'S "EVERYONE THEIR GRAIN OF SAND" RECIPIENT OF LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL'S 2005 TARGET AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY

Documentary Focuses on an Embattled Mexican Community's Inspiring Struggle for Survival in the Face of Globalization and Government Harassment

EVERYONE THEIR GRAIN OF SAND, the first feature-length documentary from internationally recognized filmmaker Beth Bird, made its U.S. debut in competition at the Los Angeles Film Festival. The film was awarded the coveted Los Angeles Film Festival's 2005 Target Award for Best Documentary, which carries an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000.

In EVERYONE THEIR GRAIN OF SAND, Bird introduces audiences to the fiercely determined citizens of Maclovio Rojas, a low-income community just east of Tijuana, Mexico, whom the state government wants to evict from their land to make way for industrial development. Community members, most of whom earn subsistence wages working at local factories run by multinational corporations, have banded together to struggle for self-determination and to create a better life for their children. But as they face-off against a mind-numbingly bureaucratic and seemingly corrupt government, the citizens of Maclovio Rojas find themselves on the front lines of the battle for global economic justice.

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In an effort to drive residents out, the state of Baja California has failed to provide Maclovio Rojas with even the most basic services including water, electricity and a local elementary school. Undaunted, the community's resourceful residents make do by tapping into water and power lines and building a school using hand tools and garage doors recycled from U.S. homes. But as the government escalates its war of attrition, even these self-sufficient acts are undermined, and the town's leaders persecuted.

One of those leaders is Hortensia Hernandez, who despite being jailed several times has continued to organize her community for seventeen years. A turning point in the film comes during the town's battle to get its new school recognized by the state, when the police break into Hernandez' house to arrest her on dubious charges. While she manages to escape and has been in hiding since December 2002, another community leader and grandmother, Nicolasa Ramos, is less fortunate: after being arrested on trumped-up charges, she was held without bail for two years and finally sentenced to six years in prison.

EVERYONE THEIR GRAIN OF SAND provides a rare glimpse of the human costs of economic globalization. Rather than being the engine for prosperity touted by multinational corporations and their political allies, so-called "free trade" has turned formerly agricultural communities like Maclovio Rojas into urban slums housing low-wage workers with no job security. Against this bleak backdrop, the resilience and communal spirit of the people of Maclovio Rojas is a beacon of hope and an inspirational reminder of the power of an organized citizenry.

More than just a chronicle of a political movement, *EVERYONE THEIR GRAIN OF SAND* is an intimate portrait of the families and individuals who make up this remarkable community. By developing close relationships with many of the residents of Maclovio Rojas over a four-year period, Bird is able to capture moments of humor, anger, frustration, fear, tenderness and joy in their everyday lives. The film is a compelling 90-minute journey filled with detailed character portraits and a dramatic storyline, taking us to a place which, while just a stone's throw from the U.S. border, seems a world apart; where centuries-old traditions co-exist with contemporary technological and economic realities, and where human rights can never be taken for granted.

"I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the residents of Maclovio Rojas and document their struggles," says Bird. "I was inspired by their resourcefulness and tenacity in the face of years of government harassment. Maclovio Rojas is a testament to the power of community organizing."

Producer, director, cinematographer and editor Beth Bird has been a documentary filmmaker for over fifteen years. Devoted to making films that bring public attention to little known social issues, Bird's previous documentaries include *D2KLA*, which focused on the clashes between the police and protestors outside the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, and *LOVE KNOWS NO BORDERS*, which examined discrimination against lesbians and gay men in U.S. immigration law. Bird's work has screened in festivals, museums and

events around the world including Austria's Viennale (Vienna International Film Festival); InSITE 2005 in Tijuana, Mexico; the Prague Biennale in the Czech Republic; Berlin's Play Gallery; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions and the UN International Conference on Women in Huairou, China.

Editor Libby Horne's credits include LIVING IN COLOR, a 45-minutedocumentary profiling South Asian Angelenos; WINDOWS, a portrait of restaurant workers at WINDOWS ON THE WORLD who were killed during the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attack and numerous short documentaries and advocacy pieces produced for various labor unions and non-profit organizations. In addition to being an editor, Horne has worked as a reporter for PBS' award-winning "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," series producer for Discovery Channel's popular "Travelers" show and as an independent producer-director for numerous educational and promotional videos.

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