



U.S. WOMEN AND CUBA COLLABORATION:

## BUILDING A U.S. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR CUBA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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U.S. Premiere of Cuban Documentary *Maestra* (Teacher)  
The 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign: Transforming Cuban Women and Society

*Maestra*, a new documentary about the 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign, will be premiered in ten U.S. cities in March/April, 2011. Accompanying *Maestra* on this national tour will be Catherine Murphy, Director/Producer, and Professor Norma Guillard from Cuba, one of the original teachers from the campaign featured in the film. Guillard was 15 years old when she and her sister joined the literacy campaign and, as she expresses in the film, "It is the most important thing I have done in the history of my life."

In 1961, two years after the revolution, Cuba recruited 100,000 youth to go to the countryside to teach peasants how to read and write. Within one year, these teachers, the majority of them young women and teenage girls, taught 707,000 Cubans to read and write, eradicating illiteracy, according to UNESCO standards, in one of the most successful literacy campaigns ever in the world. Cuba's model of achieving Literacy is currently being adopted in over 50 nations.

*Maestra* celebrates this amazing story on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the literacy campaign through original film footage of the period, photographs and personal interviews of the teachers who are now in their 60's, 70's and 80's. As they tell their stories, the Cuban women reflect on the transformation of their own lives and the whole of Cuban society as a result of the literacy campaign. For most, it was the first time these women experienced independence and realized their power.

This national tour is being cosponsored by U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration, The Literacy Project and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and is being made possible, in part, through a grant from the Christopher R. Reynolds Foundation and Marazul Charters.

Events will be held in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Maryland, Bozeman and Helena, Montana, Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, San Francisco, Berkeley and Santa Cruz, California. One of the stops of the tour will be to premiere the film at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi at the end of March. The Mississippi conference will allow for a historical exchange of experiences of the literacy campaigns in the South and in Cuba.

Please be advised that Norma Gulliard is currently awaiting a visa from the United States to participate in this tour. If the visa is not issued in time, the tour will continue with Catherine Murphy.

For continued updated information on the tour including a full calendar of events, please go to [www.womenandcuba.org](http://www.womenandcuba.org) Murphy and Guillard will be available for interviews during the dates of the national tour.

For a 7 minute trailer of *Maestra*, please go to [www.theliteracyproject.org](http://www.theliteracyproject.org)

*Our mission is to build a strong US women's movement dedicated to ending the US government blockade of Cuba and to creating mutually beneficial US Cuba relations; our work is rooted in the concept of universal human rights, racial and economic justice, and women's rights.*