Wes Moore to Host “American Graduate Day 2014”  
Live from Tisch WNET Studios at Lincoln Center in NYC,  
September 27

Day-long Multiplatform Event Celebrates the “Stories of Champions” -- Individuals and Organizations Committed to Improving Outcomes for Youth and Raising Graduation Rates


American Graduate Day 2014 returns this fall for its third consecutive year. Wes Moore, best-selling author and U.S. Army veteran, will host the all-day broadcast which premieres Saturday, September 27 from 11 am - 6 pm EDT, on public media (check local station listings). Broadcast and streamed live from the Tisch WNET Studios at Lincoln Center in New York City, the annual multiplatform event is part of the public media initiative, American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen, helping communities bolster graduation rates through the power and reach of local public media stations. Featuring seven hours of national and local programming, live interviews and performances, American Graduate Day 2014 will celebrate the exceptional work of individuals and groups across the country who are American Graduate Champions: those helping local youth stay on track to college and career successes.

“Every child deserves a quality education and an opportunity for success,” said Pat Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). “The high school graduation numbers are moving in the right direction because people have stepped up as champions for students on behalf of their communities, committed to improving outcomes for all of our nation’s youth. On American Graduate Day, local public media stations will be celebrating the inspirational stories that are contributing to the progress
our nation is making in addressing the dropout crisis.”

American Graduate Day 2014 will be anchored by “Stories of Champions,” a series of 14 one-minute profile pieces scheduled to air every half-hour, which will spotlight individuals and influential figures in local communities around the country who are successfully keeping students on the path to graduation.

"American Graduate Day is emblematic of the impact that public media can have when we work with others to address an essential issue. Last year’s program was seen by nearly one million viewers on more than 100 public TV stations, helping us shed a light on the many ways communities are successfully helping students succeed," said Neal Shapiro, president and CEO of WNET, home to public television’s THIRTEEN, WLIW21 and NJTV. "This gives us the chance to highlight the remarkable individuals, mentors and organizations at the heart of every community and to present their inspiring stories—which make a compelling case for investing in the future of America’s children.”

Hosted by Wes Moore, a bestselling author, TV personality (PBS/“Coming Back with Wes Moore” and OWN/“Beyond Belief”) and champion for youth, American Graduate Day 2014 is set up around critical themes with the goal of inspiring citizens to connect with their local public media station and local community organizations, and get involved as American Graduate Champions in helping the youth of their community succeed. Moore is also the founder and CEO of BridgeEdU, an innovative college completion platform that reinvents the freshman year. Throughout the day, a number of on-air personalities from PBS, WNET, and other media organizations will join Moore in studio for special segments. Following the program, PBS NewsHour Weekend hosted by Hari Sreenivasan will feature American Graduate Day, with an in-depth look at Florida’s experimental program to expand reading time for struggling elementary schools.

This year’s topics are scheduled to include Early Education, Caring Consistent Adults, More and Better Learning, Special Needs Communities, STEAM Programs, Dropout Prevention and Re-Engagement and College and Career Readiness. The program also devotes time to areas not covered before, including the special needs community and the work of such organizations as Autism Speaks, Best Buddies, and Special Olympics, and the importance of the arts in STEAM as a key component to More and Better Learning that can compel kids to stay in school, reflected in programs like Exploring the Arts and VH1 Save The Music Foundation, and more. In addition to “Stories of Champions,” other new features include live performances by The Raise Up Project, a spoken word group also being honored the following day at The Kennedy Center, and the Trenton Public Schools Marching Band.

The broadcast and online event will be divided into 14 half-hour blocks featuring a mix of live breaks and
pre-taped partner segments that spotlight the organizations reinvigorating communities around the country and illustrate how they provide support, advice, and intervention services to at-risk students, families, and schools. Within each of these half-hour blocks, local public media stations’ broadcasts will have the opportunity to customize the national feed with a locally-produced live or pre-taped six-minute segment.

Viewers and online users who are interested in connecting with local organizations and youth as American Graduate Champions can send a text on the day of broadcast or log on to AmericanGraduate.org to find out more about the national and regional organizations and how to help in their hometowns. Viewers will also be invited to participate in the discussion via Twitter using the #AmGrad hashtag and on Facebook.

CONFIRMED MODERATORS:
Wes Moore (PBS and OWN), Juju Chang (ABC), Rehema Ellis (NBC), Bianna Golodryga (Yahoo!), Lyn May (PBS), Stone Phillips (news anchor), Hari Sreenivasan (PBS NewsHour Weekend), Rebecca Jarvis (ABC News), Susie Gharib (Nightly Business Report), William Brangham (PBS NewsHour Weekend) and Lauren Wanko (NJTV).

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Among the national organizations featured are: 4-H, 100K in 10, America SCORES Cleveland, America’s Promise Alliance, AmeriCorps, Autism Speaks, Banister Leadership Academy, Best Buddies, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Citizen Schools, City Year, Communities In Schools, Exploring the Arts, FIRST, Gateway to College National Network, GEAR UP, GRAD Cincinnati, Horizons National, Jobs for America’s Graduates, Junior Achievement, My Brother’s Keeper, National Academy Foundation, Omaha Empowerment Network, Project SEARCH, Publicolor, The Raise Up Project, Reach Out and Read, Reading is Fundamental, Roadtrip Nation, Special Olympics, Samsung Electronics North America, Taco Bell Foundation for Teens™, United Way and VH1 Save The Music Foundation.

CELEBRITY INTERVIEWS
Tony Bennett and wife Susan Benedetto will be interviewed about Exploring the Arts; Gen. Colin Powell and Alma Powell will be interviewed about their organization, America’s Promise Alliance; Brian Williams (NBC) and Jane Williams, daughter actress Allison Williams (HBO’s Girls) and son Doug Williams (YES Network) will be interviewed about their organization, Horizons National; Michael Bloomberg (former Mayor of New York City) will appear on behalf of Publicolor; Reggie Bush (Detroit Lions) will appear on behalf of Taco Bell Foundation; Ingrid Michaelson (singer/songwriter) will give a testimonial about VH1 Save The Music Foundation; CC Sabathia (New York Yankees) and Jackie Joyner-Kersee (Olympic gold medalist) will appear on behalf of Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Miral Kotb (dancer/choreographer) will be interviewed about Girls Who Code; Andy Grammer (singer) will
host the VH1 Save The Music Foundation segment.

**American Graduate Day 2014** is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC in association with WNET. Michael Kostel is executive producer. Colin Powers is broadcast producer. Chris Brande is national segment producer. Helen Maier is co-producer. Anna Campbell is local segment producer. From the Education Department, Kimberly Mullaney is project manager and Carole Wacey is vice president, education. Neal Shapiro is executive-in-charge.

**American Graduate Day** is part of *American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen* - a public media initiative made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help more kids stay on the path to graduation.

Visit the **American Graduate** Web site for more details on participating PBS stations as well as other television and radio programs: [http://americangraduate.org/americangraduate-day-2014](http://americangraduate.org/americangraduate-day-2014).

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**About WNET**

As New York's flagship public media provider and the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to over 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as *Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend, Charlie Rose* and a range of documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as *Get the Math, Oh Noah!* and *Cyberchase* and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through *NYC-ARTS, Reel 13, NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams* and *MetroFocus*, the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the THIRTEEN Explore iPad App where users can stream PBS content for free.

**About CPB**

The **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,300 locally-owned and -operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology, and program development for public radio, television and related online services.

**About American Graduate**

*American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen* was launched in 2011 with 25 public media stations in high need communities to spotlight the high school dropout crisis and focus on middle and high school student interventions. Today, more than 80 public radio and television stations in over 30 states have partnered with over 1000 community organizations and schools, as well as Alma and Colin Powell’s America’s Promise Alliance, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Alliance for Excellent Education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Newman’s Own Foundation to help the nation achieve a 90% graduation by 2020. With primetime and children’s programming that educates, informs, and inspires public radio and television stations — locally owned and operated — are important resources in helping to address critical issues facing today's communities. According to a report from the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, American Graduate stations have told the story about the dropout crisis in a way that empowered citizens to get involved, and helped community organizations break down silos to work more effectively together. In early 2014, CPB and PBS KIDS committed an additional $20 million for the “American Graduate PBS KIDS Fund” to also help communities connect the importance of early learning as part of a student’s long term success. In addition to station grants for local engagement, the Fund will support the creation of children’s content and tools to help parents, particularly those from low income communities, better prepare their young children for long term success. Fourteen American Graduate station grantees have also been awarded CPB early education grants to reach children ages 2-8 with programming and services developed through the Ready to Learn Initiative, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

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