



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***STROKE OF HOPE FOUNDATION TO HOST BENEFIT CONCERT IN MEMORY
OF R&B STAR LUTHER VANDROSS STARRING SMOOTH JAZZ GREAT KIRK
WHALUM AND FRIENDS***

With Special Appearance by Mother Mary Ida Vandross

Yonkers, NY – Stroke of Hope Foundation announced today, the organization’s first New York benefit concert in memory of legendary R&B artist Luther Vandross. **The First Annual Celebration of Hope - Remembering Luther Vandross** stars saxophonist Kirk Whalum featuring Philippe Saisse, Jeff Golub among others. The event will take place Sunday, July 1, 2007 – on the second anniversary of the R&B star’s death after suffering a stroke – at New York City’s Borough of Manhattan Community College’s Tribeca Performing Arts Center at 6 PM.

“Stroke of Hope Foundation is near and dear to my heart,” said Mary Ida Vandross, 82, who has spent the last two years after her son’s death speaking out on preventive health care, the dangers of diabetes and stroke prevention. “People need to take better care of themselves. I have formed a meaningful relationship with Stroke of Hope and it is my mission now to try to help others.”

A stroke occurs in the U.S. every 45 seconds. It is the third leading cause of death and the #1 cause of serious, long-term disability in the U.S. African Americans are highest at risk, while about 40,000 more women than men suffer from a stroke each year.

“Stroke of Hope is very excited to have the involvement of Kirk Whalum and Mother Vandross,” said Hazella Rollins-LaVar, founder and executive director, Stroke of Hope Foundation. “So many people have been affected by this disease. When stroke touches a single life, it has a ripple effect. This event provides us with reality and at the same time is a celebration of hope.”

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Kirk Whalum, whose dad is a stroke survivor, performed his first benefit concert for the organization earlier this year in Los Angeles and has made a commitment to create awareness of the organization and its mission. "This is very special to me," said Whalum. "I have made a very personal and spiritual commitment to this cause and it gives me great pleasure to use my gift and talents not only to heal but to educate others while honoring my friend and my father."

Luther Vandross suffered a debilitating stroke in April 2003. Never fully recovering, he died two years later at age 54. During his four-decade career, Vandross sold more than 25 million copies, each one of his 14 albums achieving either platinum or multi-platinum status.

Stroke of Hope Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to improving the quality of life for people affected by stroke. Its goal is to create awareness, promote prevention and provide support for Stroke Survivors, their Care Partners, and families by encouraging physical and emotional recovery, and maintaining an on-line support system.

The event will be held at Borough of Manhattan Community College's Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers Street in New York City. It is scheduled to start at 6PM. Sponsors to date include: American Express, CD 101.9, and Borough of Manhattan Community College's Tribeca Performing Arts Center. For more information, log onto www.strokeofhope.net Proceeds from this event will benefit Stroke of Hope Foundation.

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