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## **ASIAN SISTERS PARTICIPATING IN REACHING EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCES GRAND PRIZE WINNER OF 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL OUTSTANDING WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Boston, MA (February 2, 2010) - Asian Sisters Participating In Reaching Excellence (ASPIRE™) is proud to announce **Rashmi Jasrasaria** as the grand prize winner of the **2nd Annual ASPIRE Outstanding Woman of the Year Award**. ASPIRE's Outstanding Woman of the Year award celebrates female high school or college students of Asian American descent that are proven leaders with the initiative and determination that make changes in their community. Jasrasaria was formally awarded at the 2009 ASPIRE Asian American Women in Leadership (AAWIL) Conference on October 3, 2009 at Boston University. This year's keynote speakers included Carmen Van Kerckhove, Co-Founder and President, New Demographic and Rosie Abriam, President and CEO, The Center for Asian Pacific American Women.

Jasrasaria is a volunteer with Support for International Change (SIC), a non-governmental organization in Tanzania that raises awareness about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention in rural areas. Since 2007, Jasrasaria has dedicated her time to teaching SIC's HIV curriculum in village primary schools as well as leading teaching sessions for the village locals, athletes, and religious communities. Originally from Boxborough, Massachusetts, Jasrasaria is currently a senior at Harvard University, where she also acts as the SIC on-campus coordinator through recruiting, interviewing, and training SIC volunteers. "Receiving this award motivates me to continue along an independent path in global health, community development, and social justice work," says Jasrasaria. "I am grateful to ASPIRE and SIC for supporting and encouraging me in my endeavors."

Honoring Jasrasaria, Vienne Cheung, Interim Executive Director, ASPIRE, had the following to add: "As an organization that focuses on career and leadership development, one of the fundamental things ASPIRE encourages girls to do is build confidence and to be comfortable with whom they are. Rashmi's courageous and altruistic act in tackling and bringing awareness to this global issue aligns with ASPIRE's vision. Her passion for the cause will inspire girls to gain new experiences and make the world a better place."

As the Grand Prize Winner, Jasrasaria attended the AAWIL Conference where she was honored with an award, the opportunity to spend a day with an Asian American female mentor of her choice from ASPIRE's network, and a featured profile on ASPIRE's website and other media.

Finalists of the 2nd Annual ASPIRE Outstanding Women of the Year Award included:

**First Runner Up:**

Lori Phanachone, Storm Lake, IA  
Asian Pacific American Community Activism

**Second Runner Up:**

Huong Nguyen, New Orleans, LA  
Asian American Youth Activism

**Honorable Mention:**

Sarasi Jayaratne, Potomac Falls, VA  
English Literacy in Sri Lanka

**Honorable Mention:**

Oyland Dong, Cambridge, MA  
HIV/AIDS activism in Panama

**About AAWIL**

The AAWIL Conference aims to set forth strategic dialogue on the importance of leadership for Asian American girls and women. Specifically, the conference is designed to explore various aspects of leadership (particularly as it relates to Asian American women), evaluate the effectiveness of different leadership skills and styles, energize and equip attendees to seek out future leadership opportunities, and create cross-generational networks among attendees that will extend discussions and relationships beyond the scope of the conference. The conference raises awareness about ASPIRE's mission and its value to Asian American girls and women. For more information, please go to <http://www.girlsaspire.org/conference/>.

**About ASPIRE**

Founded in 2001, ASPIRE was established to empower Asian American high school and college girls with career development and leadership skills through shared experiences and mentoring. ASPIRE aims to mentor and serve Boston-area young Asian women who seek to better navigate the lifetime of opportunities and career choices ahead, make the most of their academic and extracurricular college experiences, and learn from their Asian American sisters' accomplishments and insights. For more information, go to [www.girlsaspire.org](http://www.girlsaspire.org).