

USA Against Alzheimer's

Carol Burnett, Marilu Henner, Helen Reddy to Star in CA Performances of *Surviving Grace*, Critically-Acclaimed Alzheimer's Play by Trish Vradenburg

Events to take place in Los Angeles on September 25 and San Diego on September 27; Proceeds to Benefit USA Against Alzheimer's Network, Women Against Alzheimer's and Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the University of California, San Diego

LOS ANGELES, CA -- This September, a cast of Hollywood stars will take the stage for special ensemble readings of Act 1 of *Surviving Grace*, an original play penned by comedy writer Trish Vradenburg ("Designing Women," "Family Ties," "Kate and Allie"), co-founder of [USA Against Alzheimer's](#) – a national advocacy organization committed to stopping Alzheimer's by 2020. Based on Trish's experience as a caregiver to her mother who died of Alzheimer's in 1992, *Surviving Grace* is a brutally honest, irreverent and moving story – laced with humor – that sheds light on the emotional ups and downs that 15.4 million Alzheimer's caregivers go through each day in the U.S. The play comes to California after being produced at The Kennedy Center, off-Broadway, cross-country and in São Paulo, Brazil. The first star-studded reading was at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC last fall.

The Los Angeles performance will take place at the Stephen J. Ross Theatre at Warner Bros. Studios with honorary director **James Burrows** at the helm, and boasts a legendary cast including **Carol Burnett, Marilu Henner, Loni Anderson, Helen Reddy and Lou Gossett, Jr.** The host committee for the September 25th event also features a diverse group of performers dedicated to the cause, including **Ann-Margret, Ann Archer, Elizabeth Banks, Diahann Carroll, Richard Chamberlain, Joan Collins, Chace Crawford, Donna de Varona, Morgan Fairchild, Michael Feinstein, Carrie Fisher, Peter Gallagher, Phyllis George, Whoopi Goldberg, Linda Gray, George Hamilton, Samantha Harris, Tippi Hedren, Marilu Henner, Joanna Kerns, Donna Mills, Stefanie Powers, Seth Rogen, Maria Shriver, Molly Sims, Jill St. John, Maura Tierney, Joan Van Ark, Robert Wagner, and Henry Winkler, among others.**

Following the Los Angeles performance, *Surviving Grace* will travel to San Diego for another benefit show on September 27 at the Shiley Theatre on the campus of the University of San Diego. The San Diego production also features marquee names including local philanthropist **Darlene Shiley, Helen Reddy, Diane Rehm, Marilu Henner, Susan Taylor, Robert Foxworth and Jim Laslavic**, and is being presented by [USA Against Alzheimer's](#) and [B.A.B.E.S "Beating Alzheimer's By Embracing Science."](#), an organization dedicated to harnessing the power of women to beat Alzheimer's by raising funds to support the most promising Alzheimer's research.

Both events will feature a celebrity red carpet, followed by the play reading and receptions with the casts. **To purchase tickets in advance or to learn more about becoming a sponsor, please visit: www.survivinggrace.org**

"I thought my mom was invincible, but she was no match for Alzheimer's. I watched helplessly as her mind, her dignity, and finally her body vanished into the unforgiving chasm of Alzheimer's," said Trish Vradenburg. "So why a serious play with a large dose of humor? Because that's how I survive life – if you don't laugh, you'll cry. We have to bring this disease out of the shadows and into the spotlight; that is why I wrote *Surviving Grace* and why I'm excited to be sharing it during this special event."

Alzheimer's affects one in three seniors, and is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. The number of Americans with the disease is projected to triple by 2050 – from 5.4 million to nearly 16 million – unless we find a treatment or cure, and ten percent of victims are between the ages of 40 and 65.

"Although it touches so many of our lives, Alzheimer's is rarely discussed in polite company," said Carol Burnett. "I am thrilled to be involved in the Los Angeles production of *Surviving Grace*, which shows us that we can have these difficult conversations without losing our sense of humor along the way."

"Through my past experiences as a caregiver for my mother, uncle and aunt with Alzheimer's, I've seen firsthand that Alzheimer's is a disease that will stop at nothing to take things – moments, memories and loved ones – away," said Darlene Shiley. "However, Alzheimer's advocates remain driven by the knowledge that with the proper resources we can stop this disease and spare future generations from it."

Alzheimer's also has a disproportionate effect on women, who represent nearly two-thirds of Americans with the disease and 70 percent of caregivers.

"As a woman, I am twice as likely as a man to get Alzheimer's in my lifetime, and two to three times as likely to act as a caregiver to a family member with the disease," said Helen Reddy. "Anyone who cares about women's rights should care about finding a cure for Alzheimer's – which is why I am so excited to be a part of this special production of *Surviving Grace*."

Researchers believe that it is possible to stop Alzheimer's within the decade if the right resources are appropriately applied – just as we did for HIV/AIDS in the 1990s. In support of this goal, proceeds from the *Surviving Grace* Los Angeles premiere will support [USAAgainstAlzheimer's Network](#), a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to mobilizing individuals to demand the resources and system reforms needed to achieve the bold but attainable goal of ending Alzheimer's by 2020. Proceeds from the San Diego production will benefit the [Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center](#) at the University of California, San Diego and [WomenAgainstAlzheimer's](#), the first national network of women in leadership positions working to speed the pace of research and build momentum to end Alzheimer's disease.

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USAAgainstAlzheimer's is a related 501(c)(4) national advocacy campaign and advocacy network committed to stopping Alzheimer's by 2020. An independent non-profit organization working in partnership with the Alzheimer's community, ***USAAgainstAlzheimer's*** works to stop the disease by advancing policies that support research for a cure. For more information about ***USAAgainstAlzheimer's***, visit www.usagainstalzheimers.org.

B.A.B.E.S. "Beating Alzheimer's by Embracing Science" is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds to support the most promising Alzheimer's disease (AD) research. Because women are disproportionately affected by AD, the grassroots organization aims to capture the creative synergy of women in helping find a cure. For more information about ***B.A.B.E.S.*** visit www.alzbabes.org.