

## THE RED DRESS PROJECT

### Fashion makes a statement for women and heart disease at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week

*Heart disease is not just a man's disease—it's the #1 killer of women. The Red Dress Project makes the statement in high fashion introducing the "Red Dress" as the new symbol for women and heart disease.*

The Heart Truth is a national awareness campaign on women's heart health sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The campaign is being conducted in partnership with the American Heart Association, the Office on Women's Health (DHHS), WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, and other organizations committed to women's health.

The primary message driving *The Heart Truth* campaign is: Heart disease is not just a man's disease—it's the #1 killer of women. The campaign pairs the message with an arresting visual—the Red Dress—as the national symbol for women and heart disease.

The Red Dress is the heart of the Red Dress Project debuting at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, February 7-14, 2003, in New York during American Heart Month. This groundbreaking project, supported by Mercedes-Benz USA and 7th on Sixth (the producers of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week), launches the red dress icon to raise awareness of women's risk of heart disease. According to a national survey conducted in 2000, only a third of women know that heart disease is the leading cause of death for women.

### Why a Red Dress?

The Red Dress has proved to be a positive image to convey heart disease awareness messages targeted to women. Focus group research across the country showed that most women:

- Were aware of most major risk factors for heart disease and knew about heart-healthy behaviors—but had not adopted a heart-healthy lifestyle.

- Underestimated their personal risk (most thought they had a low to medium personal risk for heart disease even though they had risk factors such as smoking, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol).
- Did not fully understand the devastating impact that heart disease has on one's life and one's family.

The Red Dress Project is designed to build awareness that women are at risk; give a sense of hope that women can reduce their risk, and empower them to do so; and provide a clear call to action coupled with a sense of urgency.

### **The Red Dress Project**

The Red Dress Project of *The Heart Truth* campaign puts the issue of women and heart disease in the national spotlight through a partnership with the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week and the fashion industry.

Leading fashion designers contributed red dresses from either vintage or current collections to be showcased in the Red Dress Collection at Bryant Park throughout Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week.\* A Red Dress pin, specially designed for *The Heart Truth* campaign by leading accessory designer Angela Cummings, will be introduced during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week.

Mercedes-Benz USA presents the exclusive Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week magma red C320 Sports Coupe to be displayed at Bryant Park. In addition, the display area features an illustration of Angela Lindvall, Cover Girl, wearing a Donna Karan red dress photographed by David LaChapelle. The Red Dress Project of *The Heart Truth* campaign will be unveiled at a media briefing when Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week opens on Friday, February 7.

After Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, the Red Dress Project will make a stop in Washington, D.C. before heading on a national tour.

For more information about the Red Dress Project, contact Sally McDonough at (202) 452-7815 or by mobile at (571) 259-1481. Photography supporting the Red Dress Project is available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/press/press.htm>.

### **\*Participating Designers:**

Bill Blass	Anne Klein	Badgley Mischka
Chaiken	Calvin Klein	Oscar de la Renta
Diane von Furstenberg	Michael Kors	Vivienne Tam
Carolina Herrera	Ralph Lauren	Carmen Marc Valvo
Tommy Hilfiger	Luca Luca	Vera Wang
Marc Jacobs	Catherine Malandrino	
Donna Karan	Nicole Miller	