



USA NETWORK'S CHARACTERS UNITE CAMPAIGN EXPANDS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NFL, KICKING OFF WITH A NEW SERIES OF WEEKLY VIGNETTES, AND CULMINATING IN A ONE-HOUR DOCUMENTARY AROUND SUPER BOWL XLVIII

Super Bowl XLVII Champion Ray Rice To Be One of Several New Players Featured in the Vignette Series to Air During NFL Regular Season

NEW YORK – May 16, 2012 – USA Network announced today that it is expanding its Characters Unite collaboration with the National Football League. The initiative, which works to combat hate and intolerance, kicks off with a new series of vignettes during the NFL regular season and culminates with the third annual **NFL CHARACTERS UNITE** hour-long special documentary premiering around Super Bowl XLVIII. Super Bowl champion Ray Rice will be among the players featured in the weekly vignettes that highlight NFL stars sharing their personal stories of overcoming discrimination and helping a young person facing similar challenges today. Launching in November 2013 on-air, online and in select stadiums around the nation, the series will be offered as a sponsorship opportunity to marketing partners looking to align their brand to the important cause of promoting greater respect and acceptance. The announcement was made in conjunction with USA's Upfront (#USAupfront), which is being held today at Pier 36 in New York.

"We are proud to expand the collaboration between Characters Unite and the National Football League. With the combined resources of the top cable network and the top professional sports league, we can exponentially increase the reach and impact of our shared effort to combat hate and bullying – two critical issues facing today's youth," said Toby Graff, USA's Senior Vice President, Public Affairs. "The powerful and courageous stories of the NFL stars taking part will help to inspire greater respect, tolerance and acceptance."

Each of the eight heart-warming and inspiring vignettes will profile a NFL star who serves as a role model, using his own experiences to mentor a young person who is experiencing similar prejudice and discrimination today. Among those featured will be Rice, Baltimore Ravens running back and Super Bowl XLVII champion, who will be tackling the problem of bullying and teen suicide in conjunction with his efforts through Ray Rice Charitable Fund.

The vignettes will be broadcast on-air, and viewers can delve deeper into the series online, where there will be even more background on the emotional stories behind each player and young person. The documentary will kick off Characters Unite Month in February 2014, a time when USA Network shines a brighter spotlight on the initiative and the importance of promoting greater respect and acceptance.

"We are pleased to continue working with Characters Unite to highlight the positive impact NFL players have on their communities," said Tracy Perlman, NFL Vice President of Entertainment Marketing and Promotions. "We look forward to working with USA Network and The Hochberg Ebersol Company to tell these important stories."

"Each year, it is one of our company's great honors to produce 'NFL Characters Unite,'" said executive

producer Charlie Ebersol. "We are thrilled that USA Network, the NFL and its players will continue to truly inspire teens while giving viewers an often ignored first person depiction of the cycle of negativity that we all should be fighting to end with today's youth."

Previous players who participated in **NFL CHARACTERS UNITE** included Baltimore Ravens linebacker Jameel McClain, Pittsburgh Steelers strong safety Troy Polamalu, New York Giants Pro Bowl defensive end Justin Tuck, Arizona Cardinals Pro Bowl MVP wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, Atlanta Falcons Pro Bowl tight end Tony Gonzalez, New Orleans Saints star tight end Jimmy Graham, former Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver and Super Bowl XL MVP Hines Ward, and NBC's *Football Night in America* analyst and Super Bowl-winning Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy. The films have been narrated by former NBC's *Football Night in America* Emmy-winning sportscaster Cris Collinsworth.

NFL CHARACTERS UNITE was created by The Hochberg Ebersol Company and executive produced by company co-founders Charlie Ebersol and Justin W. Hochberg. The 2012 documentary was produced in by Paul Pawlowski and P3 Entertainment and directed by Ezra Edelman (HBO's *Magic and Bird: A Courtship of Rivals*). For more information on **CHARACTERS UNITE**, visit www.charactersunite.com.

ABOUT USA NETWORK The #1 network in all of basic cable for an unprecedented seven straight years, USA Network is seen in over 102 million U.S. homes. USA is a leader in scripted programming with a powerful stable of originals, spectacular live television and is home to the best in blockbuster theatrical films, a broad portfolio of acquired series and entertainment events. A trailblazer in digital innovation and storytelling, USA is defining, driving and setting the industry standard for Social TV. USA is a program service of NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment, a division of NBCUniversal. The award-winning website is located at <http://www.usanetwork.com>. Characters Welcome.

ABOUT THE HOCHBERG EBERSOL COMPANY: The Hochberg Ebersol Company (THE Company) was founded in 2010 by entertainment industry veteran Justin Hochberg and television/film producer Charlie Ebersol. THE Company creates, packages and produces groundbreaking programming in the unscripted, multi-camera comedy, docu-series, and competition formats, for a range of leading broadcast and cable networks. Credits include "The Great Escape" (TNT), "NFL Characters Unite" and "The Moment" for USA, and "Race to the Scene" (Reelz Channel). THE Company operates a full-service branded entertainment agency, clients have included "Shaq Vs.," Dick Clark Productions and "Hell's Kitchen" for Fox, as well as advertising companies including DirecTV, NASCAR, Skype, Caesar's Palace, Proctor & Gamble, Notre Dame college, the CIA, Department of Homeland Security, Camping World and Sports Illustrated. THE Company operates in-house post facilities, which includes CGI capabilities. THE Company is represented by Michael Kagan at ICM and Bill Abrams of Abrams Garfinkel Margolis Bergson, LLP.

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