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**SAVE A GIRL SAVE A World Partners with HBCUs to Address Tobacco Disparities in the Black Community!**

**(Los Angeles, CA) May 2021** – SAVE A GIRL, SAVE A WORLD (SAGSAW), a multifaceted intergenerational, mentoring organization announces the launch of the “SPEAK” (Smoking Prevention through Equity, Advocacy, and Knowledge) Project. Under the guise of the SPEAK Project, SAGSAW will work with female students at 9 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (*Alabama State University, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Bennett College, Benedict College, Clark Atlanta University, East Carolina University, Grambling University, LeMoyne-Owen, Rust College, Wilberforce University, and students from the University of Michigan and Michigan State University*) within the Tobacco Nation to conduct outreach, education, and advocacy activities on their campuses, and to broaden the engagement of young Black adults in tobacco control. The SPEAK Project will enable individuals to become more proactive and empowered to take charge of their health and well-being, motivate them to refrain from and/or quit smoking/vaping and develop an aversion to doing so. The goal is to prevent and reduce tobacco use among young Black women and girls by implementing evidence-based strategies.

The SPEAK Project is funded by a two-year $500,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). RWJF has a long history of working with national and local health organizations, faith groups, businesses, government, and others to advocate for higher tobacco taxes, strong smoke-free air laws, and well-funded programs to prevent youth from smoking and help smokers quit.

The SPEAK Project mobilizes young black women to represent their HBCUs as student Ambassadors who will lead a key component of the Project - the *SPEAK UP!* campaign. The campaign is designed to enable Ambassadors to educate their peers on the harmful hazards that smoking/vaping tobacco and flavored products, engage in outreach and communications efforts to raise awareness, and to become empowered to advocate for policy change relative to tobacco control, locally and nationally. Ultimately, the Ambassadors will become Change Agents for tobacco control and prevention, as well as other health disparities that impact young Black HBCU students, their families, and their communities.

“The SPEAK Project the Campaign is an incredible opportunity for our young women to learn how health disparities are affecting the Black community, especially in the age of COVID-19 and about how they can advocate for positive change by using their voices to SPEAK UP! and “talk about it and be about it” as it relates to preventing and reducing vaping and flavored cigarettes use among their peers,” says, SAGSAW CEO Glenda Gill.

The SPEAK Project officially kicked-off on March 21, 2021. Featured guest speakers were Letetia Daniels-Jackson, President/CEO, TANDEKA LLC, RWJF Program Consultant - Tobacco Control and Advocacy and Portia Reddick White - JD Vice President for Strategic Partnerships - Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK). CTFK Youth Ambassador Allyssa Williams- Howard University shared her story about her involvement with Tobacco Control. SPEAK Ambassadors Coriana Chavis from - Bennett College and Valmarie Mitchell-Wilberforce University shared their experiences with the groups followed by the Q & A.

For more information contact SpeakProjMgr@saveagirlsaveaworld.org.

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**SAVE A GIRL, SAVE A WORLD (SAGSAW)**

SAGSAW is a 501©3 non-profit organization that provides intergenerational mentoring, leadership development skills, and self-esteem building programs in conjunction with Historically Black colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that serve high school college-age women. SAGSAW foundation model is a GPS of life skills of four pillars: Financial Literacy & Wealth Legacy, Career & Entrepreneurship, Lifestyle & Leadership, and Health & Wellness of which include the SPEAK project.

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**

For more than 45 years, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working alongside others to build a national Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the United States' largest philanthropy focused solely on health whose goal, through the use of grants, is "to improve the health and health care of all Americans. For more information, visit [*www.rwjf.org*](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.rwjf.org&data=02%7C01%7Cfmann%40rwjf.org%7Cf326c75ea118414f34f108d4a22a485f%7C1d48189a87724db8af5930e61f44b362%7C1%7C0%7C636311749875911777&sdata=SET3EFmFi%2BM%2BfVHVrlbQ%2BHT%2FFp5ARePxk2zysE6%2FiXc%3D&reserved=0). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at[*www.rwjf.org/twitte*](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter)[*r*](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.rwjf.org%2Ftwitter&data=02%7C01%7Cfmann%40rwjf.org%7Cf326c75ea118414f34f108d4a22a485f%7C1d48189a87724db8af5930e61f44b362%7C1%7C0%7C636311749875911777&sdata=qlFtghp2niK%2FHgFlho%2BoXvHQm8%2FIDJo%2B8FzCBhLTtD4%3D&reserved=0) or on Facebook at[*www.rwjf.org/facebook*](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook)