



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Michelle Betton, Discovery Learning Alliance

240.662.3102 / michelle_betton@discovery.com

**NEW MOVIE TAKES VIEWERS ON MUSICAL JOURNEY, FROM A MINE SHAFT
TO CENTER STAGE**

*After Highly Successful Film on HIV, Producers Come Together to Engage Millions in sub-Saharan Africa
around Tuberculosis*

Silver Spring, MD – March 22, 2016 – From the producers of “Inside Story” comes a new feature-length film, **THE LUCKY SPECIALS**, combining the best of fiction and non-fiction storytelling to demystify tuberculosis (TB), explaining how it spreads and how it can be treated. Produced by Discovery Learning Alliance and Quizzical Pictures in association with Tangled Bank Studios with support from Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), the Wellcome Trust, and USAID and PEPFAR through the Leadership, Management & Governance Project, led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), **THE LUCKY SPECIALS** will entertain and educate audiences across sub-Saharan Africa, while empowering communities to make informed decisions about their health. The film will also be a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action helping audiences across the African continent understand and respond to TB. World Tuberculosis Day is March 24.

THE LUCKY SPECIALS begins in the dark, wet mining shafts of southern Africa, where rock dust and cramped quarters expose workers to various risks. Like HIV, TB is devastating communities across southern Africa in settings like this and others. TB kills more than one million people every year around the world and continues to be the leading cause of death among people living with HIV. Here, audiences will meet Mandla, a young man eager to make his mark on African music, played by Oros Mampofu. Other cast members include Blondie Makhene, Sivenathi Mabuya, Richard Lukunku, Thomas Gumede and Fulu Mugovhani; the film is directed by Rea Rangaka.

Through dynamic characters and a captivating storyline, **THE LUCKY SPECIALS** replaces misconceptions about TB with facts and shows the journey of TB bacteria inside the body through state-of-the-art animation. By making the film personal, practical and memorable, audiences will retain critical health information in a context that reflects southern African life and values.

"This movie is an unprecedented opportunity to shape how millions of people see, understand and respond to tuberculosis," said Aric Noboa, president and executive producer of Discovery Learning Alliance. "We're thrilled to be back to produce another film with Quizzical Pictures and honored to work with these world-class partners to entertain audiences while at the same time re-shaping the public dialogue around TB."

"Innovative thinking and partnerships are crucial to effectively addressing global health challenges," said Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, M.D., U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy. "'The Lucky Specials' reimagines how to deliver lifesaving information about TB and HIV to affected communities, empowering individuals to make better informed health decisions. This unique approach transports us to the heart of local communities, which hold the power to help bring life-saving treatment to HIV-TB co-infected patients and, ultimately, achieve an AIDS-free generation."

"HHMI is very excited to join with such great partners to help spread knowledge about TB," said Dr. Robert Tjian, president of HHMI. "HHMI has a special interest in improving the understanding and treatment of TB in southern Africa. We formed the KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for TB and HIV (KRITH) as a special joint project between HHMI and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa specifically to combat the twin devastating scourges of TB and HIV."

"Drug-resistant TB is a major health concern for people living in sub-Saharan Africa," said Dr. Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust. "The need for research into the treatment and prevention of TB, as well as global awareness of the crisis of drug-resistant infection, has never been greater. I hope this film will play an important role in encouraging discussions and increasing understanding of the reality of living with TB, by providing a gripping personal story which explores the impact of the disease. Building on the success of 'Inside Story,' this film will not only bring the science to life, but also offer a relevant and engaging drama to a young mass audience."

"Through MSH's extensive work with TB over the years, we have seen the damaging role of stigma along with the urgent need for increased TB awareness. This film is a novel step to reach people with critical information in a time when it is more important than ever," said Dr. Jonathan Quick, president and CEO of MSH. "Through partnerships like this one, and by continuing to implement critical interventions, we can together take huge steps to end TB."

"Discovery continues to invest in the region and is pleased to bring informative African content to audiences across the continent and beyond," said Doug Baker, COO & CFO, Discovery Networks International. "This is our knowledge brand at its best."

“Inside Story,” Discovery Learning Alliance’s first feature film, is the most widely broadcast film ever in Africa, having reached more than 400 million people across the continent. “Inside Story” was developed to combat two significant challenges in HIV prevention and treatment: misunderstanding about how HIV works (the science), and HIV message fatigue. Like “Inside Story,” **THE LUCKY SPECIALS** will offer audiences an unforgettable experience, transporting them to a vibrant inner world where hard-to-grasp science is transformed into a compelling visual reality.

A comprehensive rollout of **THE LUCKY SPECIALS** will include theatrical film screenings, national television broadcasts and grassroots distribution by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), schools, and governments. Facilitator guides and educational materials are being developed for community and public health organizations and schools to help reinforce messages. A dedicated website will help expand the reach of film content to online audiences.

For more information about the film, visit www.luckyspecials.com.

About Discovery Learning Alliance

Discovery Learning Alliance (DLA) uses the power of media to transform education and improve lives in marginalized communities around the world. DLA has opened new doors to learning in 16 countries. Its school-based interventions increase student retention, enrollment, attendance and learning, and importantly – student motivation. By building the capacity of teachers, DLA’s approach transforms classrooms and communities. DLA’s mass media initiatives address critical education, development and public health issues for tens of millions of people in the developing world. Through innovation and partnership, DLA empowers teachers, students and communities to achieve their full potential, because education changes everything. For more information, visit www.discoverylearningalliance.org.

About Quizzical Pictures

Quizzical Pictures is a leading South African production house. With awards ranging from the Peabody, the Rose D’Or to numerous local awards, Quizzical Pictures has a reputation for creating drama which combines great storytelling with a social impact. We have created numerous features and series that not only entertain but impact our society for the good: “Inside Story”; “The Science of HIV and AIDS” and “Intersexions” changed perceptions and raised awareness around HIV/AIDS. Our new feature, in collaboration with Discovery Learning Alliance, hopes to do the same for TB. For more information, visit www.quizzical.co.za.

About the Howard Hughes Medical Institute

HHMI plays an influential role in advancing scientific research and education in the United States. Its scientists, located across the United States and around the world, have made important discoveries that advance both human health and our fundamental understanding of biology. The Institute also aims to transform science education into a creative, interdisciplinary endeavor that reflects the excitement of real research. For more information, please visit www.hhmi.org.

About HHMI Tangled Bank Studios

Tangled Bank Studios is a production company established and funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as an extension of its longstanding science education mission. Dedicated to the creation of original science documentaries for broadcast, theatrical and digital distribution, the company's award-winning programs address important contemporary issues and capture compelling stories of discovery across all branches of scientific inquiry. For more information, please visit www.tangledbankstudios.org.

About the Wellcome Trust

The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health. They support bright minds in science, the humanities and the social sciences, as well as education, public engagement and the application of research to medicine. For more information, visit www.wellcome.ac.uk.

About Management Sciences for Health and the Leadership, Management & Governance Project

Management Sciences for Health (MSH) is a global nonprofit organization that works to save lives by closing the gap between knowledge and action in public health. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Leadership, Management & Governance (LMG) Project, led by MSH, strengthens health systems to deliver more responsive services to more people. The LMG Project builds on 30 years of the best thinking and practices from organizational development to empower health leaders, managers, and teams to meet and master their most pressing challenges. The LMG Project is funded by the USAID Regional HIV/AIDS Program and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) under Cooperative Agreement OAA-11-00015. For more information, visit www.LMGforHealth.org.

About Discovery Communications

Discovery Communications (Nasdaq: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK) is the leader in global entertainment reaching 3 billion cumulative viewers in more than 220 countries and territories. Discovery satisfies curiosity, entertains and inspires viewers with high-quality content through global brands, led by Discovery Channel, TLC, Investigation Discovery, Animal Planet, Science and Turbo/Velocity, as well as U.S. joint venture network OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network, and through the Discovery Digital Networks portfolio, including Seeker and SourceFed. Discovery owns Eurosport, the leading pan-regional sports entertainment destination across Europe and Asia-Pacific. Discovery also is a leading provider of educational products and services to schools, including an award-winning series of K-12 digital textbooks, through Discovery Education. For more information, please visit www.discoverycommunications.com.