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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ACT for Women and Girls Receives Nationally Recognized Award**

**New York City – On September 25, 2014**, ACT for Women and Girls received the Ellerton Award for a “bold move” in Emergency Contraception access. ACT was nominated for the award by Francine Coeytaux, a public health specialist with extensive experience in developing and evaluating reproductive health programs. Ms. Coeytaux is a leader in the area of Emergency Contraception access. The award was presented by the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ICEC) and the American Society for Emergency Contraception (ASEC) in New York City at the Emergency Contraception Jamboree on September 25, 2014. This award was established by the American Society for Emergency Contraception in honor of Charlotte Ellertson, one of ICEC’s and ASEC’s founders. (For more about Charlotte’s life and work, [click here](#).)

ACT for Women and Girls, an organization based in Tulare County (Visalia, Ca.), has worked to develop strategies for women and teens to access Emergency Contraception. In our communities, the pharmacy is often the only place women and teens can access reproductive health products and get their questions answered. ACT has designed and implemented an Emergency Contraception Pharmacy Access campaign for five years now, to try to increase access to Emergency Contraception and teen friendly services. Using secret shoppers, ACT surveys over 40 pharmacies annually and develops a "report card" which rates all the pharmacies to determine whether they are teen friendly, stock emergency contraception and reproductive health products and the teens are treated with respect. ACT has found this EC “report card” to be a very effective advocacy tool, increasing awareness about EC and dispelling myths; increasing access to EC and to pharmacy services; educating pharmacies about the needs and preferences of teens; and giving voice to an otherwise marginalized population. ACT is debuting a mobile web-site featuring the report card in Spring 2015. The web-site is being designed by a Parson’s New School of Design graduate student in partnership with Ms. Foundation for Women.

*ACT for Women and Girls is a non-profit organization based in Tulare County and works to engage women of all ages in leadership opportunities that will promote social and personal change. ACT was founded in 2005 with the creation of the Female Leadership Academy (FLA) program. From the inception of FLA, it was evident that reproductive justice issues demanded to be addressed, as our participants were often misinformed about reproductive health, justice, and access. Unlike Southern California and the Bay Area, Tulare County has few resources and is the most adversely impacted region in California regarding social issues, such as poverty, unemployment, teen pregnancy, and environmental degradation. ACT takes an active role in eradicating the oppression that lies deep in the roots of the Central Valley. Through one young woman at a time, ACT makes an impact.*

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