



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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National Domestic Violence Awareness
Month/National Crime Prevention Month

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

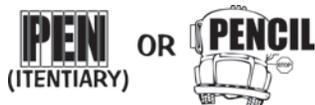
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Nationally Acclaimed Speaker Inspires New Life-Changing Curriculum

The National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) and the Kemba Smith Foundation (KSF) are pleased to announce the first four pilot locations for the national release of "**What's L-O-V-E Got To Do With It?**," a 12-module subcomponent of NAFJ's PEN OR PENCIL™ (POP) National Mentoring Initiative.

NAFJ has partnered with KSF to translate the 1994 highly publicized story of Kemba Smith which continues to be told in national media, in her book entitled, *POSTER CHILD: The Kemba Smith Story*, and recently highlighted in the graphic novel, *Race To Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling* by Marc Mauer. The release of the curriculum will pilot in school- and community-based violence prevention and diversion program efforts led by NAFJ affiliates in Seattle, Washington (4C Coalition); Metropolitan Washington, DC (Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization); Fairfield County, Connecticut (Serving All Vessels Equally); and Ft. Walton Beach, Florida (NW Florida PEN OR PENCIL™), in February 2014.

After enduring a turbulent four-year relationship with a drug dealer, Kemba, an only child and then a Hampton University student, was sentenced to 24.5 years and served 6.5 years in federal prison. Fortunately, she regained her freedom after President Bill Clinton granted her clemency in December 2000. The extreme of her sentence drew attention and support from across the nation and the world to reverse a disturbing trend in the rise of lengthy sentences for first time non-violent drug offenders. Her story has been featured on major networks to include but not





limited to CNN, ABC's Nightline, Court TV, Black Entertainment Television, and a host of other television programs. In addition, her story has been covered in leading periodicals such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, JET, Emerge and Essence Magazines.

Kemba's traumatic real life experiences reflect the consequences of her life choices and the unknown faces and stories of many pre-teens, teens, and young adults, who like her, are confronted with complex and peer-driven decisions. The launch will imbibe themes of both National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness and Black History Month (*Civil Rights in America*) and will integrate other commemorative benchmarks over 12 months. Using words which differ each month and begin with the letters, L-O-V-E, the curriculum will align with chapters from her book and will offer a unique connection to African American history, foster dialogue, provide worksheets and valuable exercises, and ideally address such issues the warning signs of and measures to prevent dating violence and abusive behavior, unique challenges of children of incarcerated parents, the characteristics of healthy relationships, diversion alternatives from school to prison pipeline. The modules will further promote character development elements such as respect for authority, liberty, responsibility, honesty, self-control and consequences. The curriculum will align with Common Core Education Standards and expand POP to 10 new states over the first 12 months.

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National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ)

NAFJ is a 501(c)(3) organization whose core mission is to promote the value of the inclusion of faith in addressing prevention, consequences, and resolutions of crime with emphasis upon the most culpable and vulnerable issues and stakeholders. **POP**, one of two trademarked programs offered in 11 states and the foundation for "What's L-O-V-E Got To Do With It?," is an evidenced-based culturally-based academic and mentoring enhancement curriculum. Learn more at www.nafj.org and www.penorpencilmovement.org.

Kemba Smith Foundation (KSF)

KSF is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. Among its purposes is to educate people, young and old, about a variety of issues that plague our communities, including but not limited to dangers of drug and alcohol abuse; teen pregnancy; domestic violence, and child abuse prevention; delinquency intervention; reentry/rehabilitation of offenders into society, racial inequities, and many other areas of concern. Learn more at www.kembasmithfoundation.org.

