

## Sci-fi fans raise awareness for global women's rights group at third annual local charity screenings of *Serenity*

*Joss Whedon's film Serenity will be the centerpiece of the third annual global charity events to benefit Equality Now, a woman's rights advocacy group. The June 2008 screenings, held by local fan groups in over 55 cities around the world, have a goal this year of raising \$150,000 in contributions.*

Austin, TX ([PRWEB](#)) March 20, 2008 – Fans of Joss Whedon's television show *Firefly* and motion picture *Serenity*, the self-stylized "Browncoats," are not that different from your average, run-of-the-mill science fiction aficionados. They dress up as futuristic space men, attend comic book and sci-fi conventions, and watch and re-watch their favorite characters on repeat viewings of their favored show or movie. What sets the Browncoat community apart, however, is their commitment and dedication to making *this* world a better place through their work to effect global change through local charity events.

In June 2008, Browncoats across the globe will screen the film *Serenity* during the third annual Can't Stop the Serenity (CSTS) charity events in order to raise funds for Equality Now.

In its inaugural year of 2006, CSTS raised over \$65,000 in 47 cities across the globe. In 2007, 46 cities brought in over \$115,000 for charity. "We are hoping to continue growing that donation amount in 2008," says Beth Nelson, Global Coordinator of the 2008 Can't Stop the Serenity events. "This year's goal is to raise \$150,000 with 55 cities participating. We are on the right track. We just had an eBay auction to have Cedric, of the Bedlam Bards, play at a Can't Stop the Serenity event of the winner's choice. Cedric raised a little over \$4,000 for Equality Now. We haven't even had an event yet, and we already have a piece of the goal accomplished."

Whedon, responsible for such television hits as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, has a very loyal following due in large part to his commitment to writing strong and intelligent female characters. Because of Whedon's commitment to such women and his own personal support of the organization, his fans donating to Equality Now seemed natural. "We chose Equality Now because of the close ties Joss Whedon has with this organization. His mother was the inspiration behind starting this human rights group."

Founded in 1992, Equality Now is a human rights organization that focuses on ending violence and discrimination against women and girls by the mobilization of public pressure. Equality Now addresses issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM), women's rights issues in developing countries, and gender equality in the Middle East.

Amanda Sullivan, Women's Action Network Director of Equality Now, applauds the efforts of the global Can't Stop the Serenity events. "All of us at Equality Now continue to be amazed by and grateful for the Browncoats' and Serenity fans' generous and committed support for our work. Their energy and enthusiasm is inspiring and these screenings are coming at a critical time when we are especially in need of funds! We thank each and every one of them."

In every city, CSTS events encompass diverse activities including costume contests, sing-alongs, and Firefly-themed dinners. The core of each event, however, are the fans uniting to watch the 2005 feature film *Serenity* and bonding over their shared passion for the characters, the film's creator, and the charity. "People often ask me why they should pay to come to see a movie they already own on DVD and my answer is simple," says Miranda Ween, Assistant Global Organizer. "You get to meet new people who also love *Serenity* and *Firefly*. There are awesome prizes to be won. And you get to be part of something special. It's a global *Serenity* event. There's nothing in the world like it, and if all of that doesn't get you there, then think of it as your good deed for the year, by giving money to a worthy cause."

"Fans are fanatical. It's true," says Nelson. "I think utilizing that fervor and focusing it into something like fundraising is exactly what we should be doing with our energy."

Some local organizers sell T-shirts and merchandise, some screen Whedon's work into the wee-hours of the morning, and some even auction authentic film props. Yet in cities from Melbourne to Manhattan, fans are coming together and trying to change the world. Each event is tailored to the local community, but is tied to the global effort.

"This will be my third Can't Stop the *Serenity* event. Recently, someone asked me why I am so involved in charity," said Jennifer Henderson, Secretary on the Austin Browncoats and Assistant Global Organizer. "I can honestly say it is because of this event. I got to know a group of people who might not have been just like me, but we shared a commonality; we all want to enjoy Joss Whedon's work and be able to use that adoration to give back to our community."

About *Firefly* and *Serenity* (from Wikipedia.org)

*Firefly* is a science fiction television series that premiered in the United States and Canada in 2002. The series was developed by Joss Whedon, who also created the cult favorite *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The series concept merged the classic Western genre with a science fiction backdrop, applying naturalistic science fiction concepts such as showcasing flawed characters in humble circumstances.

The series was broadcast on the FOX network and was canceled after only 11 episodes. However, strong sales of the DVD collection of all 14 episodes allowed Whedon to convince Universal Studios to produce a film based on the series, entitled *Serenity* after the crew's spacecraft of the same name.

For More Information

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