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Cuomo to Run in ING NYC Marathon to Support Wounded Heroes

Cuomo, Lead Actor in 'Happy New Year', the Award-winning Independent Film about Iraq and Afghanistan Troops Returning with PTSD , Laces Up in Support of Hope for the Warriors

NEW YORK CITY, November 3, 2011 – Hope For The Warriors® is proud to include Michael Cuomo, actor, producer and writer, as part of their Team for this year's ING NYC Marathon on November 6. Cuomo and his fellow Team members will run the marathon in support of Hope For The Warriors®, a national nonprofit organization that supports wounded U.S. service members, their families, and families of the fallen.

Cuomo most recently starred in and produced *Happy New Year*, the award-winning narrative feature film by writer/director K. Lorrel Manning that shocked audiences and critics during its World Premiere at the 2011 South x Southwest Film Festival (SXSW) and most recently premiered in New York at the Hamptons Int'l Film Festival with a special introduction by Maria Cuomo Cole. *HAPPY NEW YEAR* is a gripping narrative feature film that tells the story of "Staff Sgt. Cole Lewis" who, mentally and physically scarred by his time served in Iraq and Afghanistan, finds humanity, compassion and friendship in a group of similarly injured veterans in the psychiatric ward at a remote Veterans Hospital. Through humor and pathos, Lewis becomes a ray of hope in the ward, as the men find a way to combat their post-war grief. However, just as their luck starts to change, Lewis soon faces his fiercest battle yet. *Happy New Year* anticipates an early 2012 theatrical release.

His first lead in a feature film, Cuomo took it upon himself to truly get in the mind of a wounded Marine and to portray this incredibly intense, dramatic affliction to the audience. He did research to prepare for the role by attending over 80 interviews with writer/director Manning, talking with combat veterans from several eras and participating in a Marine boot camp with a former drill instructor.

"The interviews we had with veterans and VA personnel really put a human face on the harsh reality of post-war trauma that many vets and their families were dealing with," said Cuomo.

His research and role as Staff Sgt. Lewis led Cuomo to a deep connection with the wounded community and a desire to make a difference. With that, he has dedicated his running of the ING NYC Marathon to raising funds and awareness for Hope For The Warriors®.

"I am specifically interested in running and raising money for Hope For The Warriors® because they are dedicated to helping combat veterans, their families as well as families of the fallen at a critical time in this country when PTSD and the rise in suicide are harsh realities affecting our armed forces," said Cuomo. "In addition, Team Hope For The Warriors® is providing athletic opportunities for wounded veterans, which is so important to rebuild confidence and self-esteem."



Team Hope For The Warriors® will be represented by 65 runners in the 2011 ING New York City Marathon on November 6. The Team members hail from 21 different states and range from age 21 to 68. Together, this Team will raise funds and awareness for Hope For The Warriors®.

The ING New York City Marathon began in 1970 and is one of the largest marathons in the world. More than 40,000 runners are expected to finish this year's marathon. The members of Team Hope For The Warriors® were able to bypass the usual lottery system by making a commitment to raise money for Hope For The Warriors®, thereby guaranteeing themselves a spot in this extremely popular race. Last year, Team Hope For The Warriors® had 45 Team members in the marathon and raised almost \$200,000.

Team Hope For The Warriors® is a team of competitive athletes who raise funds by participating in events throughout the country. Monies raised go to sponsor their combat wounded teammates as well as support other programs from Hope For The Warriors®.

"Hope For The Warriors® is extremely thankful to the members of our Team," Robin Kelleher, Hope For The Warriors® President said. "Their fundraising efforts allow our combat wounded heroes to reach new athletic goals and be defined by their spirit and achievements, not their injuries."

The mission of Hope For The Warriors® (www.hopeforthewarriors.org) is to enhance quality of life for U.S. service members and their families nationwide who have been adversely affected by injuries or death in the line of duty. Hope For The Warriors® actively seeks to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded and fallen warriors and their families are never forgotten nor their needs unmet.

Hope For The Warriors® (Federal Tax ID 20-5182295) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity as defined in sections 509(A)(1) and 170(B)(1)(A)(VI) of the Internal Revenue Code. Combined Federal Campaign, CFC #27800.

Happy New Year (www.happynewyearfilm.com), is a hard-hitting, critically-acclaimed feature film that seeks to spark dialogue to eliminate the stigma of mental health issues within the U.S. Armed Forces by shining a light on the alarming rates of PTSD and surging suicide rate.

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