

## GETTING WOMEN 'UNSTUCK' THE PRIORITY FOR TV SERIES STUCK ON W NETWORK MARCH 4

(Feb. , 2009 – Toronto) – STUCK – a TV series embracing change and hope – springs into life for its second season on the W Network on March 4 - in time to also celebrate Women's International Day on March 8.

Over 13 weeks, the half-hour docu-soap will follow the journey of seven women from varying backgrounds, aged 23 to 52, who are all in their own way, "stuck". Fitness goals are the immediate symbol of their desire to reclaim their lives. All have tried to go it alone, but none have seen them through. The barriers have been as diverse as the women themselves.

One young woman is struggling to break free of the demands of her cultural background and achieve a confident, independent life. Another participant has long held emotional issues that have adversely affected her health and diet. And the eldest woman in the group, in a familiar theme, has a life-long pattern of always putting herself – and her health – last.

"I call them The Magnificent Seven," says 52 Media producer/writer/director Marianne Kushmaniuk (*Urban Wild, The Sexual Century*) "Not only are they willing to commit to months of hard work, they are also taking on their health and lifestyle challenges publicly on national television. It is a big job to earn and maintain their trust, support them through their journey and make sure everyone is having a healthy and positive experience."

In the first episode, premiering Wednesday March 4 at 10 p.m. ET/PT, the bar is set high as the women face the grim realities of their initial fitness assessments. Teri describes herself as a slug; Farrah faces the shocking report that her body fat is at 40% and Laurie confesses to being a sugar addict. Yo-Yo diets, struggles with self confidence, negative body images and repeated disappointment are a constant in their lives.

The series features: **Michelle**, 31, a former aspiring fitness model and mother of two who can only dream of what she looked like five years ago; **Teri**, 52, who confesses to feeling old, fat and invisible and wants to reclaim her inner strength; **Melanie**, 32, a talented kayaker and artist – and a loner who doesn't know how to interact with people; **Veronica**, 23, lives at home in a traditional Chinese environment and feels she has been told she is fat all her life; **Farrah**, 31, is a former cheerleader who feels that when the "fat came in, the sexy went out"; **Laurie**, 43, who has battled such grim eating disorders as anorexia and bulimia all her life; and **Chantal**, 32, a social worker and mother of three, who has lost her sense of direction because she is always looking after other people.

Award-winning documentary filmmaker, Liz Marshall (*Girls of Latitude*) is lead director for the second series.

"We are taking themes and storylines familiar to reality and lifestyle programming – but we dig far more deeply into the lives of our characters and their individual circumstances," says executive producer David York (*Air India 182*). "We shoot over 4 -5 months to allow for the possibility of real life change."

STUCK is produced by 52 Media in association with the W Network.

Website with background info and high res photos – [www.52media.ca](http://www.52media.ca)

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## **EPISODE SYNOPSES – STUCK, season two**

### **Thirteen half-hour episodes**

#### **W Network from March 4**

##### **Episode One - Getting Started, (March 4, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women have had some devastating physical assessments. Teri says she feels like a slug. Farrah's assessment shows 40% body fat. Veronica has been told all her life she is fat. A kick-off dinner is the place for the women to share their angst and compare notes on how to move forward. Physical fitness is secondary to getting to a better place in their lives.

##### **Episode Two - Food and a Boxing Class, (March 11, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women confront their food demons, getting some tips from the pro's on how to eat more healthily. Things get serious in the gym, too, as the women get into the ring with a boxing instructor. As well as the unusual exercise, Teri gets to work off some of her anger on a punching bag – as well as the instructor.

##### **Episode Three - Bringin' It all Home and Soccer, (March 18, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women have fun playing as a team. The support of the group is an important milestone in its moving forward. But away from the group, many feel they are still on their own. While Melanie struggles to overcome the ghosts of her past, Veronica manages to confront her trainer about his methods.

##### **Episode Four - Sexy Body and Belly Dancing, (March 25, 10 p.m.)\*\***

A belly dance class stirs up the women's thoughts and feelings about their bodies, revealing the insecurities and frustrations shared by all of them. The dance class triggers memories for Laurie of earlier days when she was comfortable and confident in her own skin – and smaller-sized clothes. Farrah and her wife Kim celebrate the anniversary of their marriage with matching tattoos.

##### **Episode Five - Improv Class, (April 1, 10 p.m.)\*\***

Melanie takes a new role in the group – that of leader. While reluctant to try it at first, the women actually get into and enjoy an improv class. Teri and Laurie share an inspiring sense of progress with their journeys. Melanie seeks some counselling for her allergies and Veronica revisits her childhood dance studio to confront a controlling person from her past.

##### **Episode Six – Gymnastics, (April 8, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women return to the scene of many a bad memory – the gymnasium. Together, they try a circuit of basic gymnastic exercises, having a lot more fun than they thought they would. They also re-visit their assessments, to get a sense of who has made progress, who has not and what the game plan is from here forward.

**Episode Seven – Trampoline, (April 15, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women mix some play into their work with a group trampoline class. They are surprised to find they have some real fun. It is also good timing, as Teri and Chantal each share some shocking - and life changing - news with the group.

**Episode Eight - Rock Climbing, (April 22, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The group decides it's time to face some fears and test their limits – and they do it at a rock climbing gym. The encouragement of the others is crucial to Teri's success on the wall. Melanie continues the trend of making big changes in her life, taking major steps to deal with her troubled past.

**Episode Nine – Yoga, (April 29, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women decide to try a yoga class, as part of their quest to bring together their bodies and minds and find balance in their lives. They continue to draw strength from each other and Laurie faces a major turning point in her life. The risks taken by some are motivating others to move forward.

**Episode Ten – Mixed Martial Arts, (May 6, 10 p.m.)\*\***

Inspired by their success so far, the women try some new things that four months ago they never would have considered. Life changes continue too, as Farrah and Teri bring their families deeper into their journeys.

**Episode Eleven – Football, (May 13, 10 p.m.)\*\***

It's time for one of the most fun activities yet. This week, the women learn football skills – and even play a modified game – with two members of the Toronto Argos. Watch Teri make a “touch-down”! After the hard work, the group decides to reward themselves with a girl's night out and, in an evening of bonding, really let their hair down!

**Episode Twelve – Fire Fighting School, (May 20, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women put the power of the group to the test at a fire-fighting course, running up five storeys and dealing with a burning car. They've become a close-knit team and it shows – both on the course and in their lives. Some of the women celebrate significant milestones in their journey, giving others that extra bit of inspiration to face their final fears.

**Episode Thirteen – The Journey So Far! (May 27, 10 p.m.)\*\***

The women get together for a celebratory dinner and take stock of how far each of them has come in the past few months. They reflect upon the changes in their lives, their bodies and their relationships. Together, the group moves forward in happier, healthier lives than they could not have imagined in the beginning.

*\*\* please note - times of broadcast subject may be subject to change*

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## **THE WOMEN OF STUCK - Season II, W Network**

### **Michelle Bacani-Lim**

A former aspiring

fitness model and mother of two, Michelle very much wants to get back into shape and be a “yummy mummy.” Michelle is very hard on herself and she’s hoping that through this journey, in addition to getting fit and healthy, she’ll learn how to be a bit kinder to herself and not beat herself up every time she doesn’t immediately get what she wants.

### **Teri Boyack**

Teri Boyack is a 52-year-old mother of two. She has never felt good in her own skin and now that she’s in her fifties, she struggles with feeling “old, fat and invisible.” Teri wants to reclaim her inner strength, overcome years of insecurity and self-doubt and finally become the fabulous and confident woman she knows she could be.

### **Chantal Brooks**

Chantal is a social worker and mother of three. This means she spends her days helping other people at work and her evenings and weekends taking care of her kids. Chantal wants to learn how to eat better, live better and how to fit all of that into her demanding schedule. She wants to set an example for her children and ensure that she leads a long and healthy life.

### **Melanie Buckle**

Melanie is a kayaker, photographer, artist, former improv performer, writer – and a loner. She’s always felt “on the outside” and even though she has many talents she feels awkward and uncomfortable in most social situations. Melanie is hoping that taking on this journey with six other women will help her learn how to connect with people and interact and engage more in the world.

### **Veronica Choi**

Veronica lives at home in a very traditional Chinese family environment. She has always struggled with low self-esteem and poor self-confidence, feeling like the “family doormat” and never good enough. A talented dancer, Veronica has been told all her life that she is fat. She is hoping that this journey will allow her to not only become strong physically, but that it will also help her to find – and express – her voice.

### **Farrah Kyle**

Farrah is a former cheerleader and self-professed onetime babe who feels that when the “fat came in, the sexy went out.” She wants to be healthy and fit again and reclaim her self-confidence. Farrah is also determined to figure out what she wants to do professionally. As she gets “unstuck” in her life, she hopes to discover her true passions and pursue them. **Laurie Ronne**

### **Laurie Ronne**

Laurie is a 43-year-old single woman determined to get her life moving in new directions. Laurie has battled eating disorders in the past (anorexia, bulimia) and several other health issues that came about as a result of these experiences. She joined the group because she is ready to make

major changes in her life, starting with her health and fitness. She is also hoping to find a new career – and to get back in the dating scene.

**Marianne Kushmaniuk**, Producer/Writer STUCK

Producer/writer/director Marianne Kushmaniuk has worked in all aspects of the television industry for the past 16 years. Her experience in documentary television has given her a valuable combination of creative, editorial and production management skills. This is her second season of producing STUCK.

Her most recent credits include the docu-drama series *Psychic Investigators*; the award-winning hour-long documentary *Something about Mary Magdalene* and the two-hour documentary special *True Vampires*. In 2006 she was the series producer of *The Truth About the Sexes*, a five-episode science series for Discovery Health US and W Network. Other recent series production credits include the hit CBC/TLC docu-drama *72 hours: True Crime* for both seasons.

In 2004, Marianne wrote, produced and directed *Crafty Animals* for Discovery International, Animal Planet and Discovery Channel Canada, which was awarded a Gold Plaque at the 2005 Chicago International Film Festival. Marianne is part of 52 Media Inc.

**Liz Marshall**, Lead Director STUCK

Liz Marshall is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, a freelance television director and a skilled photographer and camerawomen. Her heartfelt yet hard-hitting films combine a visually stylistic, intimate, character-driven approach, with a strong commitment to social justice.

Liz has travelled to many developing and war-torn countries over the past decade to explore such topics as censorship, war-affected children, globalization, sweatshop labour, refugees, HIV-AIDS and gender discrimination. She has directed documentaries for War Child Canada, PEN Canada, Right To Play, the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Plan Canada. Her work has been broadcast on Bravo!, MuchMusic, Book Television, CBC, MTV, the Independent Film Channel and other networks.

She has a passionate eye for storytelling and composition and has made a body of experimental art-based films, music videos and music documentaries. She has come aboard STUCK for its second season.

**David York**, Executive Producer STUCK, 51 Media Inc.

David York has been producing high quality, entertaining and commercially successful television for 15 years. In 1993 he produced the Gemini-Award-winning *Life with Billy* and catapulted into international recognition with the feature-length documentary *Gerrie and Louise*, set against the opening weeks of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which won an International Emmy for Best Documentary in 1997.

His many credits for long-running series include *Dogs with Jobs*, *Birth Stories*, *Gene Hunters*, *90 Days in Hollywood*, *Frontiers of Construction* and *Blueprint for Disaster* – shown on such varied networks as CBC,

national Geographic Channel, Discovery, Living UK, the CBC, W Network and others. His most recent full-length documentary was the searing documentary *Air India 182*. David founded 52 Media in 2006.

## **SYNOPSIS FOR STUCK Season II**

**STUCK**, season II, is a 13 x ½ hour TV series that follows a group of diverse women , ages 23 – 52, who have decided to get ‘unstuck’ ,, to get their lives back.

For all of them, fitness goals are the immediate symbol of their desire to reclaim their lives. All have tried to go it alone, but none have seen it through. The barriers have been as diverse as the women themselves.

One is a young woman struggling to break free of the demands of her cultural background and achieve a confident, independent live. Another is a former fitness model and mother of two who fears that she has “let herself go” and worries that she won’t ever be in shape again. For another, it’s about overcoming a history of eating disorders. One of the women has long held emotional issues that have affected her health and diet in very negative ways. And for the eldest woman in the group, it’s all about being fed-up with a life-long pattern of always putting herself – and her health – last.

All of these women share a common goal – to achieve overall fitness and wellness through a commitment to an exercise program, a healthy diet and to also have some fun along the way. Through this experience, the women have an opportunity to regain their confidence and energy and control over their lives. Together they learn new skills, develop teamwork and discover a healthy lifestyle that can be maintained for the rest of their lives.

*See sample pix below – more on the website*