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U.S. POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES 2004 HEALTH AND SOCIAL AWARENESS STAMP

**Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp dedicated during
32nd Annual Conference of Sickle Cell Disease Association of America**

ATLANTA – With the issuance of the new Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp today, the U.S. Postal Service continues a tradition of raising public consciousness of health and social issues. The 2004 commemorative stamp was issued at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta before a crowd of medical professionals, sickle cell patients and family members, invited guests, philatelists and tourists.

“Through the Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp, the U.S. Postal Service has the opportunity to educate Americans about this dreadful illness,” said Henry Pankey, Vice President, Emergency Preparedness, U.S. Postal Service. “It is our hope that this stamp will help save lives by encouraging people to get tested early.”

Actor and writer Joseph Phillips, best known for his role as Lt. Martin Kendall on *The Cosby Show*, where he played Olivia’s father and Denise Huxtable’s husband, served as master of ceremonies for the first-day-of-issue event.

“I am pleased that this day is here—the day that the United States Postal Service will issue the Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp,” Phillips said. “If you know or have known even one person with sickle cell disease, you understand its devastation and the need to heighten public awareness about it.”

Joining Pankey and Phillips were Dorothy Norwood, world-renowned gospel recording artist and evangelist; Tatiana McConnico, recording artist and actress; Willarda Edwards, MD, MBA, President and Chief Operating Officer, SCDAA; Kwaku Ohene-Frempong, MD, Chairman, Board of Directors, SCDAA; Priaona Davis, 2003-2005 National Poster Child, SCDAA; Marjorie Brown, Postmaster, U.S. Postal Service, Atlanta; and Rev. Darrell Elligan, President, Concerned Black Clergy.

Affecting one in 12 African Americans, sickle cell disease damages blood cells, blocks blood flow and damages organs. Complications range from intense pain to stroke or death.



Sickle cell disease is an inherited condition. Two genes for the sickle hemoglobin must be inherited from one's parents in order to have the disease. A person who receives a gene for sickle cell disease from one parent and a normal gene from the other has a condition called "sickle cell trait." There is no cure for this disease, though many patients, given proper treatment, can lead fairly normal lives into their 40s and beyond. Researchers continue to look for a cure and for new, more effective treatment.

Stamp illustrator and designer James Gurney of Rhinebeck, NY, created a tender image of a mother holding her baby for the Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp, and features the inscription "Test Early for Sickle Cell," a design that conveys the importance of early testing.

The Postal Service has issued many stamps that increase awareness of important health and social issues, including Organ and Tissue Donation, Prostate Cancer, Hospice Care, Adoption, Diabetes, AIDS Awareness and Neuter or Spay.

To see the Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp, visit the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1-800-STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items is available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Custom-framed prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 141 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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