

IMDSA
PO Box 1052
Franklin TX 77856
979-828-4177
www.imdsa.org

For Immediate Release: August 11, 2008

Franklin TX: **International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association** stands united with all disability organizations in the United States concerning the boycott of the film "Tropic Thunder" to be released in theaters Wednesday Aug. 13, 2008.

"Tropic Thunder" is a big-budget, R-rated summer comedy made by DreamWorks/Paramount and directed and co-written by Ben Stiller, who also stars. The movie plot centers around a group of pampered actors who are lost in the jungle while making a war movie. Stiller's character, Tugg Speedman, is presented as a fading action hero who earlier failed in his bid for Oscar glory while portraying Simple Jack, a character with an intellectual disability. Speedman's portrayal of Simple Jack is featured as a movie within the movie.

A conversation in the film between actors Ben Stiller and Robert Downey Jr., use the word "retarded", "retard" and the phrase "go full retard" in the movie over sixteen times.

In response to language and scenes degrading to those with cognitive disabilities a national coalition of disability advocacy groups met last Wednesday, Aug 8 with DreamWorks to discuss their concerns.

Gail Williamson of the Down syndrome Association of Los Angeles was one of the representatives in this meeting. "People with Down syndrome are easy targets everyday while just minding their own business because their face announces their disability. I can imagine my own son being called "Simple Jack" or "Full Retard" by someone "vulgar" as my son Blair who has DS refers to people who use this language." Said Williamson.

The national coalition of disability advocacy groups object to the frequent use of the word "retard" in "Tropic Thunder" and its promotional materials. Early promotion of the film described Simple Jack as a "retard" and an elaborate DreamWorks marketing website that was taken down last week in response to complaints carried the tagline "Once upon a time ... There was a retard."

Although DreamWorks agreed to take the scenes of "Simple Jack" from their trailers, the words used in the film will still be present upon the release of this film Wednesday Aug 13.

Kristy Colvin, president of International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association (IMDSA) joins with this nationwide boycott. "Words such as these used in this film allow for others to bully those with developmental disabilities." Said Colvin "DreamWorks must understand that words do hurt and to use these words and portray a character with developmental disabilities in this manner is not only highly offensive, but also sends a message to the community that people with disabilities do not matter."

International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association stands with thousands of others who plan to picket this film on Wednesday in hopes to send a message to the community that words such as these are offensive to the disability communities and will not be tolerated.