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**Family activism rocks the halls of psychiatry on
*When Medicine Got it Wrong***

-- A new documentary from Truly CA on KQED 9HD --
-- Premieres Sunday, May 10 at 6pm --

April 22, 2009, San Francisco CA-- In the early 1970s, popular psychiatric theories explained schizophrenia by blaming the disease on bad parenting. When a group of Northern California parents joined together to fight against those stereotypes, their efforts helped to change the way mental illness, and its treatment, were viewed forever. From filmmakers Katie Cadigan and Laura Murray, *When Medicine Got it Wrong* tells this groundbreaking story on Sunday, May 10 at 6pm on KQED 9HD, as part of the Northern California Emmy Award-winning *Truly CA* (www.kqed.org/trulyca) independent film series.

The film starts in 1974, and centers on two families – the Oliphants and Hoffmans – whose sons developed schizophrenia in their teens. Doctors told the boys that their parents were the cause of their problems, institutionalized the teens at Napa State Hospital, and warned the families that visits would be detrimental to the sons’ chances of recovery. But the parents refused to believe that actions on their part had caused their children’s illness. As Eve Oliphant said at the 1977 World Congress of Psychiatry, “We failed to understand why the parents of a child with leukemia were treated with sympathy and understanding, while the parents of a child with schizophrenia were treated with scorn and condemnation. We began to wonder if there were more wrong with the system than with us.”

When Medicine Got it Wrong shows how these families transcended extreme cultural shame to go public with their stories – first by forming a support group called Parents of Adult Schizophrenics (later the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill), and then openly challenging doctors to recognize the medical nature of their children’s ailment. Their actions prompted researchers to question assumptions about schizophrenia’s etiology, and their passion inspired parents across the country to organize and lobby for research and more appropriate, compassionate care.

The parents featured in *When Medicine Got it Wrong* waged their battles in an era when mental hospitals were shutting down and the most severely mentally ill were turned over to “community care.” Yet in the community, virtually no treatment centers would take in severely ill patients because, ironically, these patients were too sick to participate in therapy. Many became homeless and their untreated symptoms often resulted in bizarre behavior, senseless crimes, and ultimately, incarceration.

When Medicine Got it Wrong addresses misconceptions about severe mental illness head-on and provides historical context for our contemporary mental health care crisis. Through the personal perspective of families, audiences get a rare view inside the continued struggle for better understanding and care for some of California’s most vulnerable citizens.

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About the Filmmakers

Katie Cadigan's most recent feature documentary, HBO/Cinemax's *People Say I'm Crazy*, won international acclaim and broke ground as the first film on schizophrenia ever photographed by a person with the illness. Cadigan has served as an Adjunct Professor at Stanford University, teaching documentary film and video production. She is an advisory board member of UCLA's Center on Media and Medicine in Community and holds an A.B from Brown University and a M.A. in Communication from Stanford University's Documentary Film Program.

Laura Murray's directorial debut, *Slender Existence*, a documentary on recovering from eating disorders, screened on PBS and received many awards including a Student Academy Award. Named a "Filmmaker to Watch" by the Independent Film Channel, Murray has since edited five feature documentaries including *People Say I'm Crazy* for Katie Cadigan, and *Best Sister* for Academy Award-winner Ira Wohl. Murray is currently an Adjunct Professor at Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles, teaching documentary video production and courses in Film & Social Justice. She received her M.A. in Communication from Stanford University's Documentary Film Program, and a B.A. in Film and Drama from Vassar College.

About Truly CA

Winner of five Northern California Emmy Awards, *Truly CA* is KQED's series of independent documentaries about life in the Golden State. Since 2007, select *Truly CA* films have been presented by KQED to stations throughout California. It airs monthly on Sundays at 6pm on KQED 9HD. *Truly CA* is a KQED production presented in association with the Bay Area Video Coalition and Film Arts Foundation. Support for *Truly CA* is provided by The Campaign for the Future Program Venture Fund, Ambassador James C. Hormel, and the members of KQED.

About KQED

KQED (www.kqed.org) is a service of Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc. (NCPB). KQED Public Television, the nation's most-watched public television station, is the producer of local and national series such as *QUEST*; *Check, Please! Bay Area*; *Jacques Pépin: More Fast Food My Way*; and *Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures*. KQED's digital television channels include 9HD, Life, World, Kids and V-me, and are available 24/7 on Comcast. KQED Public Radio (88.5 FM in San Francisco and 89.3 FM in Sacramento), home of *Forum* with Michael Krasny and *The California Report*, is the most-listened-to public radio station in the nation with an award-winning news and public affairs program service. KQED Education Network brings the impact of KQED to thousands of teachers, students, parents and the general public through workshops, community screenings and multimedia resources. KQED Interactive offers video and audio podcasts and live radio stream at www.kqed.org, featuring unique content on one of the most-visited station sites in public broadcasting.

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