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**Chris Draft and St. Louis Rams Invite Student Leaders
to Screening of The Great Debaters**

ST. LOUIS – On Friday, Jan. 11, 300 St. Louis Public High School students will attend a private screening and panel discussion of the Golden Globe nominated film ***The Great Debaters*** at the Chase Park Plaza Cinema.

The panel discussion will be moderated by ***St. Louis Post-Dispatch*** Columnist **Bryan Burwell** and will include key community leaders, students and educators as well as Rams team members **Chris Draft**, linebacker; **Isaac Bruce**, wide receiver; and **Corey Chavous**, safety.

According to St. Louis Rams linebacker Chris Draft, the movie event is a part of the Chris Draft Family Foundation's Character Team™ initiative and is sponsored by the Foundation, the St. Louis Rams and the Weinstein Company, an independent film studio based in New York.

The high school students, identified by the Foundation as "Draft Picks," were singled out for this honor based on input from peers, teachers and coaches. Draft explains, "The Character Team initiative was launched in August 2007 in an effort to help students across the country extend the character-building lessons learned from participation in team sports and extracurricular activities as they apply to everyday life." He added, "I was personally inspired and moved by the film and hope to share in a discussion of the movie's underlying message of the importance of pride, perseverance and personal responsibility with high school student leaders. Bringing the student leaders from the SLPS high schools to "A Discussion and A Movie" is a way for us to give the students a voice in the community and to express their opinions clearly to individuals who can help them work to make a difference. "

The Great Debaters is a true story that chronicles the journey of Professor Melvin Tolson (Denzel Washington), a brilliant but volatile debate team coach who uses the power of words to shape a group of underdog students from a small African American college in the Deep South into a historically elite debate team. In their pursuit for excellence, Tolson's debate team receives a groundbreaking invitation to debate Harvard University's championship team.

The film is directed by two-time Academy Award winner Denzel Washington and stars Washington, Academy Award winner Forest Whitaker, Jurnee Smollett, Nate Parker, Denzel Whitaker, and Kimberly Elise. *The Great Debaters* was written by Robert Eisele and Tom Epperson, produced by Todd Black, Kate Forte, Oprah Winfrey and Joe Roth and is currently playing in theaters nationwide.

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