



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LOS ANGELES-BASED BLACK GIFT BUSINESS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Shades of Color, LLC Celebrates 20 Years of Creating Uplifting Gifts, Calendars and Stationery While Donating Over \$240,000 Worth of Goods Through Philanthropy

Los Angeles, CA – July 1, 2015: As we celebrate the birth of our nation this weekend, a small Black-owned business honors its own milestone with 20 years in the Black Gifts and Calendar industry. Having survived one of the worst economic downturns of the century, Shades of Color stands strong as it grows its fundraising and philanthropic programs for a community impact that is both noteworthy and inspiring.

What began as a niche outlet for African American calendars in the mid-nineties has grown into an established enterprise utilizing genuine Black Art from some of the country's top African American Artists on functional items such as journals, note cards, bible bags, mugs, tote bags, kitchenware, holiday cards and stationery. For two decades Shades of Color has creatively brought the beauty of Black Art to thousands who may not have otherwise been able to afford it in a very practical way. The company was started by two aspiring African American men just turning thirty. Courtney Hines and Adrian Woods saw a void and sought to build a company to celebrate African American culture. The result was producing positive African American gifts to reflect the everyday community, and their unique products have held a firm stake in the black gift market ever since.

"It has been very rewarding to see how far we have come since those early days," says Adrian Woods. "Our product line has grown more than we ever imagined. Our next step is for greater accessibility. While our website is open to all customers, we want to increase the number of retailers carrying our items and grow our online outlets with Amazon and additional providers."

In recent years Shades of Color has offered fundraisers and entrepreneurial-spirited individuals opportunities to sell their African American Gifts as a means of additional income. People of all ages, groups of all sizes, schools, churches, troops, sororities and individuals have participated in the year round program and have reported very successful results as well as the independence to better their finances. The owners are very excited about the program's direction to allow others to share in the profits.

Shades of Color is celebrating its fifth year of supporting organizations related to children, women and faith-based groups particularly in the African American community. The *Shades of Color Gives Back Program* has donated over \$240,000 worth of in-kind gifts. Most recently the company gave nearly \$30,000 worth of calendars to the Challengers Boys & Girls Club, and has also donated a portion of profits from its "Help Find A Cure" magnet to charities dedicated to breast cancer prevention amongst African American women.

Shades of Color prides itself on using social media to connect with its audience on a more personal level. "It's been a true gift to watch our fan base grow and see first-hand what resonates with our customers," says Janine Robinson, Social Media Manager. "From conversations about Black achievements, religion and current events our online connection is very faceted. We look forward to growing our extended family both online and in person over the next twenty years – and then some."

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ABOUT SHADES OF COLOR, LLC

Founded in 1995, Shades of Color, LLC produces the highest quality Black calendars and gifts available. The company manufactures inspirational and uplifting black products nationwide in addition to a fundraising program that enables groups, churches, schools, families and individuals to make money year round. #20YearsStrong (www.ShadesGifts.com) (www.facebook.com/ShadesCalendars) (www.pinterest.com/shadescalendars) (www.twitter.com/Shadesofcolors)

ABOUT CHALLENGERS BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Challengers Boys & Girls Club has been widely recognized as being one of the most successful youth outreach organizations in the nation dedicated to promoting the optimal social development for at-risk youth ages 6 to 17. They have provided critical services for more than 35K at-risk and economically disadvantaged youth since its inception in 1968.