FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Asylum, Ellis School announce 2014 Woman of Courage Residency
Iranian writer, activist Moniru Ravanipur

PITTSBURGH, PA — Feb. 10, 2014: City of Asylum and The Ellis School announced today that Iranian writer and activist Moniru Ravanipur is the School’s 2014 Woman of Courage and visiting writer-in-residence at both Ellis and City of Asylum. Ravanipur will come to Pittsburgh for a daylong residency for students and faculty at Ellis on March 6, culminating in the school’s annual Women of Courage lecture; she will give a salon reading at City of Asylum on March 7.

“Moniru Ravanipur is an Iranian writer in exile, who has been a resident writer at City of Asylum Las Vegas as well as a Fellow at the International Writers Project at Brown University,” said City of Asylum co-founder and chairman Henry Reese. “We first presented her at our Iran Unveiled reading in 2009, and she recently participated in one of our live online ‘Exile Hangouts’ at SampsoniaWay.org. It’s a special pleasure to welcome Moniru back to City of Asylum Pittsburgh, and to continue this wonderful collaboration with The Ellis School.”

Dr. Norma Greco—who serves as Dean of Faculty at The Ellis School and teaches English there—founded the Women of Courage speaker series in 2010 in honor of International Women’s Day. Since 2011, City of Asylum and The Ellis School have worked in partnership to identify a woman writer living in exile in the US for the series, and to bring her to Pittsburgh for readings, residency, and events at both campuses. Past Women of Courage speakers have included writers, activists, and journalists Khet Mar (Burma, from City of Asylum/Pittsburgh) and Sonali Samarasinghe (Sri Lanka, from Ithaca City of Asylum).

“The Women of Courage speaker series was founded to inspire young women to believe in the power of writing as a force of truth and change,” said Dr. Norma Greco. “We present a woman writer who is in exile because she has had the courage to challenge openly political oppression and injustice in her homeland through her writing.”
Moniru Ravanipur at The Ellis School
2014 Woman of Courage
March 6, 2014

8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Residency activities for students at faculty at Ellis.

6:30-7:30: p.m. Reading and discussion
Moniru Ravanipur will speak about her life and read excerpts from her writings. Open to the public. The Ellis Auditorium. Free. Parking is free and available at the School's main lot located at 6425 Fifth Avenue in Shadyside.

Moniru Ravanipur @City of Asylum
March 7, 2014

7:00 p.m. Reception – 7:30 p.m. Reading
Moniru Ravanipur will read from a work-in-progress at City of Asylum
330 Sampsonia Way, Pittsburgh PA 15212
The event is free but space is limited; reservations are required. Reserve online at http://www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org/events

About The Ellis School
The Ellis School is the only independent school for girls in the region. The School’s values include citizenship and integrity, diversity, and leadership and individual potential. More information is available at www.theellisschool.org.

About City of Asylum
Founded in 2004, City of Asylum is a sanctuary for writers in exile and under threat in their home countries. City of Asylum fosters freedom of expression, social justice and community development through writer residencies, publications, and literary programs—bringing writers, readers and neighbors together through literature and cultural exchange.

www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org
www.facebook.com/cityofasylumpittsburgh
www.sampsoniaway.org

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A major figure in post-revolutionary Iranian literature, **Moniru Ravanipur** has published many books in Persian, including the novels *Ahl-e Gharq (The Drowned)*, *Del-e Fulad (Heart of Steel)*, and *Kowli Kenar-e Atash (Gypsy by Fire)*. Her two short story collections, *Sangha-ye Sheytan (Satan’s Stones)* and *Kaniz*, are available in English translation, and her story "Satan's Stones" was included in *Strange Times, My Dear*, the PEN Anthology of Iranian Literature. Her novel *Afsaneh* has recently been published in English translation.

“In all her work, readers discover her unceasing effort to fight injustice and to challenge the subjugation of human beings, whether by the autocratic rule of the theocratic government or the norms of outmoded male-dominated society,” notes M. R. Ghanoonparvar, Professor of Persian and Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. While Ravanipur herself maintains that her fiction is not overtly political, her honest portrayals of the lives and concerns of Iranians, in particular Iranian women, led to her blacklisting by the government. In early 2007, her books were stripped from Iranian bookstore shelves in a country-wide police raid. Ravanipour has led a campaign against the stoning of women and has spoken openly at international conferences about the reform movement in her home country.

Ravanipur has led a campaign against the stoning of women and has spoken openly at international conferences about the reform movement in her home country. She was among seventeen activists to face trial in Iran for their participation in the 2000 Berlin Conference, accused of taking part in anti-Islamic and anti-Iran propaganda. She is a former Brown University International Writers Project Fellow and former resident writer at City of Asylum Las Vegas.

**Learn more about Moniru Ravanipur**
