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Eighth Annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Chicago Raises More Than \$7.7 Million

More Than 3,400 Participants Walk Through Chicago; Grants Awarded to Eight Local Breast Cancer Organizations

Chicago, IL, June 6, 2010 – The eighth annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer season continued with the Avon Walk Chicago this weekend, which raised more than \$7.7 million to advance access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer. The Avon Walk Chicago, the fourth of nine Avon Walks this year, attracted more than 3,400 participants from 45 states, Washington, D.C., and Denmark, including 307 breast cancer survivors, who joined together to raise lifesaving funds and awareness for breast cancer.

Financial expert and special ambassador for the Avon Foundation, **Suze Orman**, raised more than \$105,000 in donations for the Avon Walk Chicago – the most a walker has ever raised for a single Avon Walk. Orman, who was scheduled to celebrate her birthday at the Avon Walk by walking and participating in the Closing Ceremony, instead ended up having an emergency appendectomy birthday surprise.

The season nine **Biggest Loser** winner, **Michael Ventrella**, from Bartlett, IL, walked with his mother, Maria, and presented the Avon Foundation with a \$10,000 donation at Opening Ceremony.

During the Closing Ceremony at Soldier Field Tamara Habib, 25, a six-month breast cancer survivor from Chicago, spoke movingly about her battle with breast cancer and her Avon Walk in Chicago this weekend. “The Avon Walk has been a beautiful distraction from my challenges. Even though my target keeps moving in my fight against breast cancer, my goals in raising the funds and walking the miles have been constant. I knew that this Walk was something I could do not only for me, but also for so many other people my age who need help to win their fights.”

Carol Kurzig, president of the Avon Foundation for Women, announced during the Closing Ceremony a total of more than \$2.35 million in grants to eight local organizations, ensuring the funds raised immediately benefit the community. More grants are slated to be awarded throughout the year to breast cancer programs nationwide. “Our beneficiaries are changing the course of breast cancer - here in Chicago, across the country, and around the world. Let’s thank everyone for their hard work,” said Kurzig. “We have supported breast cancer organizations in the Chicago area for many years and the outpouring of support and generosity through the Avon Walks enables us to make substantial and much-needed new grants that will benefit those facing breast cancer in Chicago and nationwide.”

The new Chicago-area grants include:

- **Stroger Hospital** received **\$150,000** to support the Breast Cancer High Risk Screening Program, which will provide more than 400 underserved women access to genetic counseling services. Genetic Counselor Christina Seelaus accepted the award.
- **Mercy Hospital** received **\$150,000** to continue support of a patient navigation program and the purchase of new ultra sound equipment. Connie Murphy accepted the award.
- **Sinai Health System** received \$250,000 to support Patient Navigation services reaching underserved populations in Chicago’s west side neighborhoods of North Lawndale and South Lawndale. Epidemiologist Kristi Allgood accepted the grant.

- **Northwestern University** received **\$150,000** to support research to determine if two biomarkers accurately predict which women are at high risk to develop breast cancer. Dr. Seema Kahn, professor of surgery, accepted the award.
- **Washington University Siteman Comprehensive Cancer Center** received \$300,000 for research to determine if hereditary changes to DNA increase the risk of developing early onset breast cancer in young women. Postdoctoral Fellow Missy Fish accepted the award.
- **University of Illinois-Chicago** received \$300,000 to support research to determine if breast cancer risk can be predicted based on a new series of biomarkers they have identified. Postdoctoral Fellow Szilard Asztalos accepted the award.
- **Rush University Medical Center** received \$300,000 to support research to study a new protein named Runx2, to determine if it promotes cancer-related changes in healthy breast tissue. Assistant professor Jitesh Pratap accepted the award.
- **Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University**, the Avon Walk medical sponsor this weekend and the home of the Avon Foundation Breast Care Center of Excellence and the Avon Breast Cancer Research Laboratories, received \$750,000. The new grant will support access to breast care for low income women at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the Erie Family Health Center, as well as support new research to better understand the effect that naturally occurring pregnancy-related changes have on the development of breast cancer. Kara Kennedy, clinical coordinator, accepted the grant.

About the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Chicago

During the Avon Walk Chicago, which is a noncompetitive event, women and men had a choice of walking a marathon (26.2 miles) or a marathon and a half (39.3 miles) over the weekend. The event kicked off Saturday, June 5, with an early morning Opening Ceremony at Soldier Field. Following the ceremony, walkers began their journey, traveling through Chicago and concluding at the Avon Walk “Wellness Village” at Warren Park, a “tent city” complete with two-person tents, hot showers, prepared meals, entertainment, and recreational activities such as the Spa Zone, yoga and Tomboy Tools’ “Tool School 101” demonstrations. On Sunday, June 6, walkers completed another 13.1 miles together, ending back at Soldier Field, where thousands of family and friends greeted them and shared in a celebratory and moving Closing Ceremony, including the awarding of new grants.

To participate in the Avon Walk Chicago, each walker raised a minimum of \$1,800 in donations. The Avon Foundation for Women [a 501(c)(3) public charity] raises and manages funds, which are awarded to local, regional and national breast cancer organizations to support five areas of the breast cancer cause, including awareness and education, screening and diagnosis, access to treatment, support services, and scientific research, all with a focus on the medically underserved.

Donations are still being accepted for the Avon Walk Chicago, and registration is still open for women and men to take part in the remaining Avon Walks of 2010: Rocky Mountains, CO (June 27-28); San Francisco, CA (July 11-12); Los Angeles, CA (September 12-13); New York, NY (October 10-11); and Charlotte, NC (October 24-25).

The Avon Walks series launched in 2003 and through 2009 the Avon Walks have raised more than \$345 million through the dedication of nearly 120,000 participating women and men.

To register, donate or for additional information, please visit www.avonwalk.org or call **800-541-WALK**. For information on the Avon Foundation visit www.avonfoundation.org.

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The Avon Walk for Breast Cancer thanks National Sponsors: Reebok and Genentech BioOncology; and Official Sponsors: Tomboy Tools, Yoga Journal and Otterbox.

Remember: early detection can help save lives. Schedule your mammogram or clinical breast exam today. For more breast cancer information and resources, visit www.cancer.org (keyword breast cancer) or www.avonfoundation.org, where you can access free printable breast cancer informational literature.