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## **SEVENTH ANNUAL AVON WALK FOR BREAST CANCER BOSTON RAISES MORE THAN \$5.6 MILLION**

### **AVON WALK BOSTON CONTINUES EVENT SERIES WITH MORE THAN 2,500 PARTICIPANTS & GRANTS AWARDED TO 6 LOCAL BREAST CANCER ORGANIZATIONS**

**Boston, MA, May 17, 2009** --- The seventh annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer season continued with the Avon Walk in Boston this weekend, which raised \$5.6 million to advance access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer. The Avon Walk Boston. is the third of nine Avon Walks this year, and the event attracted more than 2,500 participants drawn from 37 states, including 214 breast cancer survivors, who joined together to raise lifesaving funds and awareness for breast cancer.

During the Closing Ceremony at UMASS Boston, walker and 4-year breast cancer survivor Hillary Ross from Cambridge, MA was one of several speakers who provided an immediate reminder of the impact of breast cancer and the importance of taking personal action to make a difference.

“My road to survival has been both physical and emotional.,” said Hillary Ross. “But my life with cancer awoke something in me. Something that enabled me to take control of my medical destiny and make informed decisions about what was going to happen to -- and in -- my body. My Avon Walk journey began at that cheering station on Mass Ave. and has not stopped since.”

Dr. Marc Hurlbert, Director of the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade, announced during the Closing Ceremony a total of more than \$5.6 million in grants to 6 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. “We are delighted with the results of our seventh Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Boston,” stated Hurlbert. “We have supported breast cancer organizations in Boston for many years, but the outpouring of support and generosity through the Avon Walk this year, especially in light of economic situation we are all facing, has allowed us to once again make substantial and much-needed new grants that will benefit those facing breast cancer in Boston and nationwide.”

The new Boston -area grants include:

- **Massachusetts General Hospital received \$750,000** to continue Avon funded research studies and access to care programs at the Avon Venter at Mass General and the community clinics in Chelsea, Gieger Gibson and Mattapan. Accepting the award was **Kristen Barnicle**, Manager of Community Benefit Partners.
- **Boston Medical Center received \$549,891** to continue support to the “Avon Breast Health Initiative at Boston Medical Center” which provides patient navigation services, community outreach, and access to care for medically underserved populations. Accepting the award was **Dr. Tracy Battaglia**, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology.
- **University of Massachusetts Amherst received \$453,282** to support three separate research projects, all looking at different ways etiologic factors may play a role in breast cancer. Accepting the award on behalf of the team of researchers is **Dr. Joseph Jerry**, Director of the Breast Cancer Working Group, Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute.

- The **Silent Spring Institute received \$200,000** to support updating population breast cancer data for all Massachusetts counties into the MassHEIS environmental information system and finding a research fellowship into potential environmental causes linked to breast cancer. Accepting the award is **Dr. Robin Dodson**, research fellow.
- **Community Services received \$100,000** to support their Avon Door-to-Door Delivery Program, serving thousands of meals to breast cancer client families and educate hundreds on proper nutrition during cancer treatment. Accepting the award is **David Waters**, Chief Executive Officer.
- The **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute received \$100,000** to support a third year of research focused on understanding how changes in healthy breast tissue alters risk of breast cancer. Accepting the award is **Dr. Kornelia Polyak**, Associate Professor of Medicine.

During the Avon Walk Boston, 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, May 16<sup>th</sup>, with an early morning Opening Ceremony at UMASS Boston. Following the Ceremony, walkers began their journey, traveling through the greater Boston area and concluding at the Avon Walk “Wellness Village” at Reebok International Headquarters in Canton, MA, a “tent city” complete with two-person tents, hot showers, prepared meals, entertainment, and recreational activities such as the Spa Zone, yoga, and new this year, Tomboy Tools’ “Tool School 101” demonstrations. On Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, walkers completed another 13.1 miles together, ending back at UMASS Boston where they were greeted by thousands of family and friends who shared in a celebratory and moving Closing Ceremony, including the awarding of new grants.

To participate in the Avon Walk Boston, each walker raised a minimum of \$1,800 in donations. Funds raised are managed and disbursed by the Avon Foundation for Women [a 501(c)(3) public charity] and 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 Boston, and registration is still open for women and men to take part in the remaining Avon Walks of 2009: Chicago, IL (June 6-June 7); 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).

To register, donate or for additional information, please visit [www.avonwalk.org](http://www.avonwalk.org) or call **800-541-WALK**. For information on the Avon Foundation visit [www.avonfoundation.org](http://www.avonfoundation.org).

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*The Avon Walk for Breast Cancer thanks National Sponsor: Reebok; and Official Sponsors: Genentech BioOncology and Tomboy Tools.*

*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](http://www.cancer.org) (keyword breast cancer) or [www.avonfoundation.org](http://www.avonfoundation.org), where you can access free printable breast cancer informational literature.*