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## **AVON WALK FOR BREAST CANCER SAN FRANCISCO CLOSES WITH CEREMONY IN GOLDEN GATE PARK**

### **Avon Foundation Awards \$300,000 Raised by Walkers For Breast Cancer Care and Support for Medically Underserved Women in the Bay Area**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA – June 29, 2003** – At the closing ceremony of the *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer*, held today at 4:00 p.m. at Speedway Meadow in Golden Gate Park, the Avon Foundation awarded a **\$200,000 gift to Mendocino County Cancer Resource Center**, an independent community-based organization that provides breast and other cancer education, support services and advocacy throughout rural Northern California, and a **\$100,000 gift to CityTeam Ministries**, a grassroots organization dedicated to serving homeless populations in the San Francisco area and eight other U.S. cities by providing food, shelter and healthcare. The grants represent a portion of the funds raised by the walkers of the *Avon Walk* San Francisco event, explained Tracey Warshaw, who made the Avon Foundation gift announcement. Additional grants from *Avon Walk* funds will be announced in the future.

The *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* San Francisco was the fifth of eight weekend events taking place through September this year. More than 1,400 women and men took part in the event, walking 39 miles and serving as crew members to raise funds and awareness for access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer.

The *Avon Walk* San Francisco began early Saturday morning, June 28 at Speedway Meadow in Golden Gate Park. Until dusk, walkers traveled the route towards the Wellness Village at Crissy Field in the Presidio, where participants camped out overnight and enjoyed relaxing and relevant activities, including health and wellness lectures, yoga and entertainment. The Village also provided the essentials to keep participants comfortable, including sleeping tents, hot showers, prepared meals and comprehensive medical services provided by volunteer medical sponsor University of California, San Francisco Comprehensive Cancer Center and San Francisco General Hospital. A section of the Wellness Village also was open to participants' friends and family and the general public. Today, all walkers completed the final 13.1 miles of the route, returning to their point of origin – Speedway Meadow in Golden Gate Park – for the closing ceremony celebration. Throughout the weekend, a dedicated all-volunteer crew cared for the walkers, ensuring their safety and supporting their needs.

#### **About the Funded Beneficiaries**

In existence for nearly 10 years, Mendocino County Cancer Resource Center (MCCRC) works through a cadre of volunteers who have been trained to provide breast and other cancer education, support services and advocacy free of charge. The Avon Foundation gift will support the WeCAN!™ program of MCCRC to provide Consultation Planning and Recording methods to medically-underserved women undergoing evaluation for breast abnormalities. Consultation Planning and Recording was developed at Stanford and the University of California San Francisco and MCCRC is the first rural site to roll out this service in a network of safety-net clinics. It enables patients to prepare, ask and record answers to questions regarding treatment options, side effects and efficacy of various treatments before they meet with their physician(s). A patient navigator is assigned to each woman participating in the program to assist her in this process and help with all necessary follow-up.

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“We are pleased to receive this generous gift from the Avon Foundation,” said Sara O’Donnell, executive director, Mendocino County Cancer Resource Center. “The WeCAN! project received partial funding by The California Endowment, however the Avon Foundation contribution will enable the program to expand to full capacity and serve the large rural county of Mendocino.”

CityTeam Ministries serves three large communities in Northern California: San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. The gift from the Avon Foundation will support a breast cancer detection initiative at the San Francisco location of CityTeam that will be designed to identify women with breast problems and get them the immediate care they need. An experienced nurse and her support staff, along with volunteer medical personnel, will evaluate homeless women who visit the center for possible breast abnormalities. A partnership with three local clinics and the San Francisco General Hospital will be established where diagnostic work-ups will be performed and treatment will be provided by San Francisco General Hospital when necessary. Patient navigators with experience dealing with the homeless population of women will ensure that these women get the care they need by accompanying them throughout the medical diagnosis and treatment process.

“With this gift, the Avon Foundation will enable us to identify and address possible cases of breast cancer among homeless women in San Francisco, a service these women would never receive if it were not for this financial support,” said Shirley Pounds, executive director, CityTeam. “With other community partners, we can create an effective and appropriate pilot program from which others may learn.”

“We are pleased to provide medically underserved women in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area with quality breast cancer care, treatment and support,” said Kathleen Walas, president, Avon Foundation. “For as long as there is a need, Avon is committed to funding access to care for all women and finding a cure for breast cancer.”

The Avon Foundation also recently awarded funds to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, The Bay Area Breast and Cervical Health Collaborative and other vital breast cancer organizations and programs statewide. Additionally, multi-million dollar gifts were awarded to the University of California, San Francisco and San Francisco General Hospital to construct the Avon Foundation Comprehensive Breast Center at the Hospital, which will open in 2004.

### **About the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer**

The *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* is a series of outdoor, non-competitive fundraising events structured for all fitness levels, offering participants a choice of completing a marathon walk (26.2 miles) or a marathon and a half (39.3 miles) over a weekend. Walkers are required to raise a minimum of \$1,750 to participate, and are fully supported by an all-volunteer crew. Funds donated to the *Avon Walks* are managed and disbursed by the Avon Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity. National sponsors include: FIJI Water, *health* magazine and RYKÄ, footwear for women.

The new *Avon Walks* build on the 10-year heritage of the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade and the Avon Foundation’s 50 years of supporting women’s health and economic empowerment worldwide. Throughout its decade-long commitment to raising significant funds and awareness for the breast cancer cause, the Avon Crusade has returned an unprecedented \$250,000,000 – 100% of its net proceeds – to five areas of the breast cancer cause, including breast cancer awareness, screening and diagnosis, treatment, support services and scientific research. Beneficiaries range from leading cancer centers to community-based non-profit breast health programs in the U.S. and in 50 countries.

### **2003 Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Event Schedule (in chronological order):**

Washington, D.C., April 26-27	San Francisco, CA, June 28-29
Boston, MA, May 3-4	Portland, OR, July 12-13
Cincinnati, OH, May 17-18	Los Angeles, CA, September 6-7
Chicago, IL, June 7-8	New York, NY, September 20-21

To register to walk or crew, or to pledge financial support for the *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer*, visit [www.avonwalk.org](http://www.avonwalk.org) or call 1-877-WALK AVON for more information.