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Eighth Annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Boston Raises More Than \$5.8 Million

More than 2,600 Participants Walk Through Boston; Suze Orman Presents Avon Foundation Grants to 11 Local Breast Cancer Organizations

Boston, MA, May 16, 2010 – The eighth annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer season continued with the Avon Walk in Boston this weekend, which raised more than \$5.8 million to advance access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer. The Avon Walk Boston, the third of nine Avon Walks this year, attracted more than 2,600 participants from 47 states, France and Bermuda, including 228 breast cancer survivors, who joined together to raise lifesaving funds and awareness for breast cancer.

During the Closing Ceremony on the UMASS Boston campus, Jerry and Mari Astell, a married couple from Hampstead, NH, spoke movingly of the struggle with breast cancer they both endured. Jerry was diagnosed with breast cancer on Thanksgiving 2007, followed by a colon cancer diagnosis in September 2008; Mari received her breast cancer diagnosis on Thanksgiving 2008.

“I was a healthy 51-year old man living happily with my wife of 31 years in our small town in New Hampshire,” said Jerry Astell. “The last thing on my mind was getting breast cancer, but sometimes the last thing on your mind is the first thing you have to deal with in life. We came here to Boston and Mass General, where besides a lot of pink everywhere, they didn’t care what body parts I had as long as those parts could become cancer-free.”

His wife, Mari, said: “I’ve still got side effects from my breast cancer treatment and I knew that Jerry could walk every one of the 39.3 miles at the Avon Walk this weekend. But he insisted that we take every step side by side. It just wouldn’t be us to split up. So together, we walked 23 miles and shared a tent at the Wellness Village this weekend.”

Suze Orman Awards 11 Avon Foundation Grants

Suze Orman, financial expert and Special Ambassador for the Avon Foundation, announced during the Closing Ceremony a total of more than \$2.6 million in grants to 11 local organizations, ensuring the funds raised will immediately benefit the community. More grants are slated to be awarded throughout the year to breast cancer programs nationwide.

“Joining me here on stage are people from your community who are leading the fight against breast cancer,” said Orman. “They represent facilities that are doing cutting-edge research to find a cure and that offer services to patients regardless of their ability to pay. The new grants we present today will help them continue to save lives.”

The first grant went to:

- **Community Servings** of Jamaica Plain, MA, which received a **\$100,000** grant to support its Avon Door-to-Door Delivery Program, which brings thousands of meals to breast cancer clients and their families. Vice President of Programs Rosario Dominguez accepted the grant.

The next four grants awarded will strengthen the Avon Safety Net program in New England. Avon Safety Net Grants fund more than 100 hospitals across the country to ensure that all women have access to quality breast cancer services, regardless of their ability to pay. These new grants will fund critical services such as patient navigators and interpretation services, as well as vital equipment, and will reach women from Massachusetts, Maine and Rhode Island. Recipients include:

- **Baystate Medical Center** in Springfield, MA, received a **\$100,000** grant, accepted by Breast Health Navigator Elizabeth Depergola;
- **Central Maine Medical Center** in Lewiston, ME, received a **\$140,000** grant, accepted by Regional Director of Medical Imaging Cynthia Harradon;
- **Cambridge Health Alliance** in Boston, received a **\$150,000** grant, accepted by Lisia Caldeira, a fellow walker and breast health navigator; and
- **LifeSpan Foundation** received a **\$150,000** grant to support patient navigation at both the **Rhode Island and Miriam Hospitals** in Providence, RI, accepted by Breast Health Navigator Margot Powell.

In addition, the Avon Foundation awarded six research grants:

- **Silent Spring Institute** received a **\$150,000** grant to support a research fellowship looking at the potential role of the environment in breast cancer development. Research Scientist **Robin Dodson** accepted the award.
- **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute** received a **\$200,000** to support research to understand how normal changes to the breast during pregnancy can be used to predict future breast cancer risk in healthy women. Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations Janna Schultz accepted the grant.
- **University of Massachusetts Amherst** received a **\$285,000** grant to support a project to measure the levels of BPA in breast milk and determine whether increased levels are related to breast cancer risk. Associate Professor Dr. Kathleen Arcaro accepted the grant.
- **Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center** received a **\$300,000** grant to support a research project to study if an acute form of a common virus (typically associated with mononucleosis) plays a role in the development of breast cancer or the success of treatment. Principal Investigator Dr. Gerburg Wulf accepted the grant.
- **Tufts University** received a **\$300,000** grant to examine different types of cells in breast tissue – the “stroma” cells and milk duct cells – to uncover their role in breast cancer risk. Post-doctoral Associate Dr. Lucia Speroni accepted the grant.
- A grant to **Massachusetts General Hospital**, home of the Avon Foundation Breast Care Center of Excellence and the Avon Walk Boston medical sponsor, covered both research and patient care. Mass General received **\$750,000** to support research studying novel PARP inhibitors as a promising class of therapeutic agents in the treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer, as well as supporting programs to help low income women receive care at the Avon Center at Mass General and the community clinics in Chelsea, Geiger Gibson and Mattapan. Assistant Professor of Medicine Dr. Beverly Moy accepted the grant.

About the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Boston

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 15, with an early morning Opening Ceremony on the UMASS Boston campus.

Following the ceremony, walkers began their journey, traveling through the greater Boston area and concluding at the Avon Walk “Wellness Village” at Reebok Corporate 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 Tomboy Tools’ “Tool School 101” demonstrations. On Sunday, May 16, walkers completed another 13.1 miles together, ending back at the UMASS Boston campus, 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 Boston, 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 Boston, and registration is still open for women and men to take part in the remaining Avon Walks of 2010: 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).

The Avon Walks series launched in 2003 and through 2009 the Avon Walks have raised more than \$328 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.