



# Maine Breast Cancer Coalition News & Views

winter 2009

[www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org)

1-800-928-2644

## Online Breast Cancer Resource Guide Now Available

We are pleased to announce the launch of the statewide [Maine Breast Cancer Online Resource Guide](#), a cooperative project of the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, the [Maine Health Forum](#), the [Maine Cancer Foundation](#), and the [Martha B. Webber Breast Care Center](#).

This free online guide is a comprehensive resource for finding breast cancer or breast health related services throughout the state of Maine: [www.mainehealthforum.org/breastcancer](http://www.mainehealthforum.org/breastcancer)

## National Breast Cancer Coalition Advocacy Training Conference May 2-5, 2009

Change is coming to Washington---and so should you! Join hundreds of breast cancer advocates and hear the latest news in breast cancer science, research, and policy. Whether you are a first time attendee or returning participant, there is something for everyone: hearing the latest breast cancer news and science, learning how to influence decision-makers, networking with other advocates. Add your voice to the fight to end breast cancer!

This year's conference will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel from May 2-5 in Washington, D.C. Pre-conference registration rates (January 17 –April 17) are \$115 for NBCC members and \$165 for non-members. Scholarships are available according to need. For more information or to register visit [www.stopbreastcancer.org](http://www.stopbreastcancer.org) or call 1-866-640-0969.

## One Million Women, One Research Goal, One Revolutionary Opportunity: *Love/Avon Army of Women* Launched

(from a press release by the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation)

On October 1, 2008 the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation and the Avon Foundation launched the **Love/Avon Army of Women**, a groundbreaking initiative that will partner women with breast cancer researchers to find the key to what causes breast cancer and take science beyond a cure to *prevention*.

Women have taken personal action to raise millions of dollars by walking, running, and donating to the fight against breast cancer. These dollars have helped advance breast cancer treatment and move us closer to a cure. But there is still no prevention. Now the Love/Avon Army of Women offers a singular new opportunity -- a simple but revolutionary call to action for one million healthy women of all ages and ethnicities to join the "Army" and be available to take part in the research that will help scientists understand the causes of breast cancer—and how to end it once and for all.

Current breast cancer research is concentrated primarily on improving imaging devices that can detect tumors early, developing drugs to kill cancer cells, and understanding why cancer cells become resistant to existing drugs. The Love/Avon Army of Women is the visionary dream of Dr. Susan Love to change the paradigm, and through this new program, the Avon Foundation and the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation will:

- Encourage researchers to expand their focus from treating cancer to understanding what causes normal breast cells to become cancer cells.
- Shift the focus from finding breast cancer early and treating it once it occurs to preventing it in the first place.
- Provide researchers with timely and easy access to women volunteers so that they can shift their focus from the lab to real women.
- Empower women to take the next step in breast cancer research.

### How Does it Work?

The unique impact of the Love/Avon Army of Women is that it serves as an **online resource providing researchers much-needed and unprecedented, timely access to healthy women -- a critical component to prevention research**. At the same time, the program offers women the opportunity to play a significant, direct role in helping eradicate breast cancer. Virtually all women not currently undergoing breast cancer treatment, including healthy women, breast cancer survivors, and women who are

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at high risk for developing breast cancer, can enroll in the Love/Avon Army of Women online at [www.armyofwomen.org](http://www.armyofwomen.org), providing basic information and indicating their willingness to consider participation in future research studies.

**Scientists apply to the Army of Women for the opportunity to recruit volunteers for their research.**

Their studies undergo a thorough scientific, safety, and ethical review. An email about approved research is sent to the Army of Women “members” with information about the study, and those who are interested in participating and meet the criteria are instructed on how to contact the researcher or a designated Army of Women research center. Through this careful, but speedy process, the Army of Women provides researchers access to these volunteers. That process may involve completing a questionnaire, providing blood or saliva samples, or other relatively simple levels of participation on the part of the volunteer. All information is kept strictly confidential, and the women participate on a purely voluntary basis.

Researchers have partnered with the Army of Women because they believe it will advance their research goals. “Right now, I can only study breast cancer after it’s been detected,” says Thea Tlsty, PhD, a cancer researcher of the University of California, San Francisco. “This has allowed me to learn an incredible amount about what happens after cells acquire the genetic changes that lead them to become cancer cells. Getting tissue from women who have not yet been diagnosed will allow me to gain insight into what is causing these cancer cells to form in the first place.”

*To find out more about the Love/Avon Army of Women or to sign on to be “one in a million”, women may visit [www.armyofwomen.org](http://www.armyofwomen.org).*

## Science News from Silent Spring Institute

### *High levels of toxic flame retardants in California spark concern.*

(October 2008 Silent Spring Institute press release)

We all want to protect ourselves and our families from fires. But are the very regulations intended to protect us unintentionally exposing us to toxic chemicals? A new study led by Silent Spring Institute suggests California’s strict furniture flammability standard – the strictest in the world – may be leading to elevated levels of flame retardant PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers) in California homes and residents, compared to other locations across the country and the world.

PBDEs have been added to everyday household items like foam furniture and electronics since the 1970s. A growing body of evidence shows that PBDEs can drift out of those products into air and dust, where people can breathe or ingest them. Children are especially vulnerable because, as parents know, they spend a lot of time on the floor and like to put things in their mouths. A recent report by the Environmental Working Group shows young children have levels of PBDEs in their blood three times the levels found in their parents.

Although the human health effects of PBDEs remain uncertain, animal tests suggest these chemicals cause thyroid hormone disruption, and reproductive and developmental problems. Adding cause for concern, PBDEs are close relatives to PCBs – banned industrial chemicals used in electrical equipment – which have been linked to breast cancer and impaired brain development in humans.

The Silent Spring Institute study found levels of penta-BDE, a commercial mixture of PBDEs used in furniture foam, in California house dust that were 4 to 10 times higher than other areas in the US and 200 times higher than in Europe. The most contaminated homes had the highest levels ever detected in indoor dust. The researchers also found penta-BDE in the blood of California residents at levels twice as high as the national average.

The good news is that penta-BDE manufacturing has already been phased out due to health concerns. But the chemical lingers in older products, the environment, wildlife, and humans. Lead study author Ami Zota commented, “Virtually all the penta-BDE produced globally was used to meet this fire standard, and now these chemicals have been detected in nearly every species across the globe.”

Also troubling is that in order to meet California’s stringent standards, new chemicals have been substituted that are similar in form to PBDEs – and thus suspected to be similarly toxic – but that haven’t been tested for safety. These alternative flame retardants include the widely used but little studied Firemaster 550, and TDCP (tris [1, 3-dichloro-2-propyl] phosphate), a probable human carcinogen. “Concerns about safety gave PBDEs a bad name so the US manufacturer stopped making them. The problem now is that one hazardous chemical is being traded for another,” said study director, Ruthann Rudel, senior scientist at Silent Spring Institute.

California is now considering expanding its fire standards to include bed coverings, and the federal government is considering adopting similar standards – measures that would likely increase the use of potentially harmful flame retardants. Zota noted, “We need to shift chemical policy in this country so that chemicals are fully tested for environmental and health effects before they are used widely in everyday consumer products.”

The study was published online on October 1, 2008 in *Environmental Science and Technology*. To learn more, visit the Silent Spring Institute website: [www.silentspring.org](http://www.silentspring.org).

## Support Service Fund Annual Summary

The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition **Support Service Fund** provides financial assistance for breast health or breast cancer related needs to underserved Maine people. The Fund assists low-income, uninsured, or underinsured people who don't qualify for, or whose particular needs aren't covered by other assistance programs. Since the Fund began in 2000, we have awarded grants to more than 1,000 Maine residents who had nowhere else to turn for assistance.

*The following are statistics for our 2008 grant program:*

- Number of people receiving grants: 191
- Counties represented: 15 Maine counties
- Total amount awarded: \$85,000
- Grant range: \$42 to \$900
- Age range of applicants: 22 to 98

*Representative items and services funded in 2008:*

- breast imaging (mammography and ultrasound)
- chemotherapy
- radiation treatments
- lab/pathology
- radiologist readings
- surgeon/physician fees or copays
- lymphedema compression garments
- prescriptions
- travel expenses to treatments
- wigs/ turbans
- prostheses
- genetic testing
- temporary living expenses for people in breast cancer treatment
- many other support services

*To find out more about the Support Service Fund or to apply for a grant call Maine Breast Cancer Coalition toll free at 1-800-928-2644 or download an easy-to-complete application from our web site at [www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org)*

## Support Service Fund: A History of Dedicated Sponsors

The MBCC paused to reflect on the success of the Support Service Fund (SSF) in October 2008 as we passed the milestone of serving 1,000 Maine residents in eight years. We could not have chosen a more fitting location to celebrate this unique project than the awe-inspiring Margaret Chase Smith Library in Skowhegan and the wonderful staff there who welcomed us so warmly.

The need was recognized for a program of financial support 10 years ago, and thanks to champion swimmer Dan DeLuca's commitment to honor his mother by donating the proceeds from Moosehead Lake swims in 1999 and 2000, the financial foundation was built to enable start-up of this new endeavor to assist Maine neighbors needing breast health or breast cancer related services.

We would like to take an historic look back to thank some of the SSF dedicated contributors as we look forward to a successful new year of our program.

We are grateful to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure-Maine Affiliate, the Maine Cancer Foundation (MCF) and the Borman Family Foundation, who have never failed to approve our grant applications. Since they awarded our first grant in 2001, Komen has contributed over \$250,000. The MCF and Borman Family Foundations have each supported us with a combined total in excess of \$97,000. The Frances Hollis Brain Foundation donation of \$5,000 in 2004 was a significant help to our volunteer organization in continuing to fund our program.

The Greater Bangor Women's Ski and Snowboard Club and the York Hospital Breast Cancer Survivors' Group are sustaining supporters by donating annually since 2001 for a combined total of nearly \$42,000. The Maine Fraternal Order of Eagles *Pink Sock Foundation*, along with additional donations from the Brewer Aerie and Auxiliary, has donated \$35,000 in the past four years. The dedication of these community groups is so appreciated.

A number of Maine businesses have chosen to direct their philanthropy efforts to our fund for specified time periods, enhancing our ability to fund requests. The Maine Coffee Roasters, Stonewall Kitchen, Inverness Medical, and the Smiling Cow have contributed over \$13,500 from their efforts in the past two years. A particularly innovative 2008 *Pink Key Project* by PATCO Construction of Sanford contributed \$13,500, largely earmarked to help applicants specifically with transportation costs while in breast cancer treatment.

Our hats are off to an amazingly diverse list of groups and fundraising projects, often inspired in honor or memory of a friend, with proceeds they kindly direct to the Support Service Fund. With full acknowledgement that we will miss mentioning some of the projects, we give you at least a sampling but extend our appreciation to all: the Lisa Levinson Sail in 2001, Curves franchises, cookbook sales, dances and musical performances, wine and cheese tastings, a basket bingo sponsored in honor of an elementary school teacher, church calendar sale, and a breast cancer walk.

The continued success of the Support Service Fund is possible because you care to support it. We sincerely thank you.

**We would like to express our appreciation to the following groups, organizations or businesses that recently held fundraising events or made in-kind donations to the [Support Service Fund](#):**

Atlantic Orthodontic Center and Tanya Glidden in honor of Gloria Westerman: \$2,000  
Curves of Windham: \$455  
Greater Bangor Area Women's Ski and Snowboard Club: \$4,800  
Inverness Medical Innovations of Scarborough: \$814.50  
Margaret Chase Smith Library, Skowhegan, with special thanks to Lynette Gravel King and Vanessa Caron: provided the venue for our Support Service Fund Celebration event  
Minott's Flowers and Gifts and Joseph P. Egan: \$100  
PATCO Construction of Sanford: \$6,000, bringing the total contributions from their Pink Key Project to \$13,500.  
Reed-Dyer barbecue proceeds: \$220  
St. Joseph Hospital Print Shop, Bangor, with special thanks to Dave Votaur: donation of the printing of all Maine Breast Cancer Coalition newsletters for 2008  
Skowhegan Hannaford Brothers Supermarket with special thanks to John Gibson: donation of the refreshments for our Support Service Fund Celebration event  
Skowhegan Walmart with special thanks to Linda Babcock: donation of supplies for our Support Service Fund Celebration event  
The Smiling Cow in honor of Clair Frye: \$449.00  
Stonewall Kitchen: \$125.87  
University of Maine at Fort Kent Student Nurses' Organization breast cancer walk: \$1,156.75  
Z-107 Radio Station "Bras Across Maine": \$7,200

**We are grateful for the following recent individual donations for the Support Service Fund from:**

Patty Bovee in honor of Linda Beiler  
Margaret Collmus  
Victoria Choate in honor of Sharon Pratt  
Sara Wallbridge in honor of Nancy Brown  
Tim Webster  
Two anonymous donations

Donations in memory of Marilyn Wing:  
Ruth Mendell family  
Sheila Thorne  
Mary Blaschke

Donations in memory of Kaitlin Osborne:  
Lorraine B. Brodsky  
Marcia Buck  
Tanya Harrison  
James and Elaine Herlan  
Bethany McNaughton  
Karen O'Neil  
Waldo County Technical Center

*How You Can Help*

The **Support Service Fund** is only partially supported by grants from major foundations. MBCC also relies on contributions from local groups, businesses, or individuals. If your community group, business, or organization would like to dedicate all or part of the proceeds from a fundraising effort to the **Support Service Fund**, contact grants chairperson Christine Haiss at 207-938-4018 or [czh1@roadrunner.com](mailto:czh1@roadrunner.com). One hundred percent of these donations will go to **Support Service Fund** recipients, as our low administrative costs are covered by our Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure grant.

Or please consider a tax-deductible donation of any amount. See the donation and membership form below for details. Checks should be made payable to MBCC. Please write "Support Service Fund" on the memo line if you would like your donation to be designated for the Fund.

*MBCC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*

**Yes!** *I want to support the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's work.*

I want to be active in the *Maine Breast Cancer Coalition*. Please contact me.

I want to become a member of MBCC. Enclosed is a check for \$15 (individual) or \$100 (business or organization membership) payable to MBCC.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (eve.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
(if you would like to be on our newsletter email list)

*The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*

I want to make a tax-deductible contribution. Enclosed is a check payable to MBCC for \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
In honor/memory of \_\_\_\_\_

I want to donate the following gifts or services:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check for membership and/or contribution with this form (or a photocopy) to:  
Maine Breast Cancer Coalition  
499 Broadway  
PMB 362  
Bangor, ME 04401-3460

