



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND AWARDS GRANT FOR MULTICULTURAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROGRAM TO WISE & HEALTHY AGING

Local Organization Recognized With Support From National Program

SANTA MONICA, CA (March 18, 2008) – The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund has awarded a \$50,000 one-year grant to WISE & Healthy Aging to increase awareness of the life-saving benefits of early detection of breast cancer. It is the tenth year that the program has received Avon Foundation funding to support its work on this important health issue, and in recognition of the excellence of the program.

The Multicultural Breast Cancer Early Detection Program at WISE & Healthy Aging educates Los Angeles area women and refers them to low-cost or free mammograms and clinical breast exams at WISE & Healthy Aging's clinic and other local clinics. This vital program includes The Los Angeles Witness Project®, a volunteer based educational program using "Witnesses" (breast or cervical cancer survivors) and "Lay Health Advisors" to educate African American women about the importance of early detection. A similar program, Esperanza y Vida® reaches out to Spanish speaking women. Volunteers and staff are available to provide presentations in churches, senior centers, schools and other community sites, and to staff informational tables at health fairs and other events.

Since 1999 WISE & Healthy Aging has reached over 45,000 women with information about the importance of early detection of breast cancer and provides 800-1000 free clinical breast exams and mammograms annually to low-income, uninsured medically underserved women.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women in the U.S., and the leading single cause of death overall in women between the ages of 40 and 55. According to the American Cancer Society, 19,710 new cases of breast cancer will be detected in California this year and 4,185 lives will be lost. Nationwide, there is a new diagnosis every three minutes and a death from breast cancer every fourteen minutes. While advances have been made in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure, early detection still affords the best opportunity for successful treatment.

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Programs such as WISE & Healthy Aging's Multicultural Breast Cancer Early Detection Program help ensure that all women have access to early detection information and options, even poor and medically underserved women.

Many women testify to the benefits of this lifesaving program. "I am so thankful for WISE & Healthy Aging's free mammograms", says Sarah K, who was diagnosed at WISE & Healthy Aging's clinic 5 years ago. "Even though my sister died of breast cancer, I thought I wouldn't get it because I was eating right and taking good care of myself. After three normal annual mammograms, I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002. I was shocked, but very thankful that it was found early. Thank you WISE & Healthy Aging and thank you Avon. Thanks to you, I've received treatment, and I'm here to tell everyone to get their annual exams. They're lifesavers!!"

Since 1993, the Avon Foundation has awarded more than 1,000 grants to community-based breast health programs across the United States, including the Multicultural Breast Cancer Early Detection Program at WISE & Healthy Aging. These programs are dedicated to educating underserved women about breast cancer and linking them to early detection screening services. "We are very grateful to the Avon Foundation for their ongoing support of this very successful program. We continue to encounter women in our community who are not getting their breast cancer screenings because of misunderstandings about the importance of annual mammograms, or who do not know that free screenings, and treatment, if needed, are available. With Avon funding we are able to save women's lives and reach out to women who would otherwise go unscreened", says Holly Kiger, V.P. of Clinical Programs at WISE & Healthy Aging.

The Avon Foundation and Breast Cancer Crusade

The Avon Foundation, an accredited 501(c)(3) public charity, was founded in 1955 to improve the lives of women and their families. Now past the half century milestone, the Foundation brings this mission to life through the *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program and the *Avon Breast Cancer Crusade*, which raises funds and awareness to advance access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer, with a focus on the medically underserved. Since 1992 the *Avon Breast Cancer Crusade* has raised and awarded more than \$525 million worldwide for medical research; access to care; support services; screening and diagnostics; and education and awareness. The largest fundraising program in the U.S. is the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer series.

The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund

The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund is administered by Cicitelli Associates Inc. to support community-based, non-profit breast health programs across the country. The Fund's National Advisory Board selected the Multicultural Breast Cancer Early Detection

Program at WISE & Healthy Aging as one of 143 new grant recipients nationwide in the 2008 cycle of Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund grants. These organizations were chosen based on their ability to effectively reach women, particularly minority, low-income, and older women, who are often medically underserved.

For more Information

To volunteer or schedule a presentation by the Multicultural Breast Cancer Early Detection Program staff and volunteers at WISE & Healthy Aging please call Vienna Hayes at 310-394-9871, ext. 390. For more information about breast cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or www.cancer.org, or the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or www.cancer.gov.

To learn more about the Avon Foundation, call 1-866-505-AVON or visit www.avonfoundation.org, where you can also access the free printable *Breast Health Resource Guide* in English and Spanish. For information or to register or support the *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* events, visit www.avonwalk.org or call 1-888-540-WALK.

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WISE & Healthy Aging, a social services organization, enhances the independence, dignity and quality of life of older adults through leadership, advocacy and innovative services. This nonprofit is the result of a recent merger of WISE Senior Services and Center for Healthy Aging.