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DRIVEN TO FIND A CURE

The 10th Annual Ultimate Drive Program rolls through the Florida Suncoast, raising awareness and funds for the fight against breast cancer

TAMPA, FLA., June XX, 2006 – More than 500 Florida Suncoast residents drove 14,084 miles in only four days to raise awareness and funds for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The 10th Annual Ultimate Drive Program raised \$14,298 that will support a variety of local programs including breast health education, clinical breast exams, screening mammography and diagnostic evaluations.

The 2006 Ultimate Drive Program kicked off March 9th in Charlotte, North Carolina, and will make 241 stops nationwide before concluding in Las Vegas at the end of October. The Florida Suncoast leg included stops at Southpointe BMW in Sarasota; Fields BMW in Lakeland; and Bert Smith, St. Petersburg and Ferman BMW in Palm Harbor.

The Drive features two Signature Vehicles – 2006 BMW 3-Series – painted a shimmering Titanium Silver with swirls of pink ribbons and the phrase “10 Years, 10 Million Miles, 10 Million Dollars”. Each BMW 3-Series Signature Vehicle leads 19 other BMWs, a fleet for the East and a fleet for the West.

At the end of every drive, participants will add their names to a Signature Vehicle making it a mobile memorial to those who have lost their battle against breast cancer, and a sign of hope and inspiration to others still fighting the disease. Photographs of “Local Heroes” from each leg of the tour are also affixed to the BMW 3-Series Signature Vehicles.

As in years past, a “Local Hero” – a community resident who has made an outstanding personal effort in the fight against breast cancer – was honored in an awards ceremony. St. Petersburg Local Hero Melba Martinez has not only won her battle with breast cancer, she has created breast cancer support resources for Latinas.

Martinez was diagnosed with breast cancer after receiving her first mammogram at age 40. After relocating to Tampa from Puerto Rico and speaking limited English, understanding her diagnosis and treatment options proved difficult.

Martinez joined several support groups during her grueling battle, but was shy to speak English and wished for more resources in Spanish. After becoming a volunteer counselor with the American Cancer Society’s Reach to Recovery program, several Latinas with breast cancer were referred to her.

In August 2002, Martinez started the first Hispanic breast cancer support group in the Florida Suncoast, Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (Latinas United for a New Awakening) or LUNA. The first LUNA group started with five survivors in Tampa and has grown to include more than 60, with groups in Brandon and Pinellas County. Juventud LUNA, for Latinas under 40, was started in April 2006.

About Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (LUNA)

Created in August 2002 by Melba Martinez, Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (Latinas United for a New Awakening), or LUNA, was the first Hispanic breast cancer support group in the Florida Suncoast. The first LUNA group started with five survivors in Tampa has grown to more than 60 survivors, with groups in Brandon and Pinellas County, as well as one for Latinas under age 40, named Juventud LUNA. In May 2005, LUNA provided the first Oncology Camp for Latinas through funding from the Susan G. Komen Foundation. For more information about LUNA, please visit www.hispanicbreastcancer.org.

About the Ultimate Drive Program

The Ultimate Drive Program was created by BMW to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer research and community outreach programs. For each mile driven in one of the BMW Ultimate Drive vehicles, \$1.00 is donated to the Komen Foundation to support breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment programs. Since 1997, over a quarter of a million people have participated in the Ultimate Drive, driving over nine million miles. To date, BMW of North America has donated more than \$10 million dollars to help find a cure for breast cancer.

There is no purchase necessary to drive the vehicles in the BMW Ultimate Drive, and all proceeds from the test drives are donated directly to the Komen Foundation. All administrative costs of the Ultimate Drive Program are underwritten by BMW separately and apart from the funds raised for this program. Visit www.bmwusa.com/theultimatedrive or call 1-877-4A-DRIVE to find a schedule or to make a reservation.

About the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation is fighting to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. In addition to funding research, the Komen Foundation supports education, screening and treatment projects in communities around the world and delivers the life-saving message of early detection to millions of women and men.

Since 1999, Komen's Florida Suncoast Affiliate has grown to serve Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties. Seventy-five percent of funds raised by events like the annual Komen Race for the Cure® go directly to the community, with the remainder going to the national Foundation's research and awards program. In 2006, \$686,000 has been awarded to 16 grantees to support a variety of programs providing breast health education, clinical breast exams, screening mammography, diagnostic evaluations and treatment in the community.

For more information on the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, please visit www.komensuncoast.com or call toll free 877-506-6927. To learn more about breast health, breast cancer or the national Komen Foundation, please visit www.komen.org or call the National Toll-Free Breast Care Helpline, 1.800 I'M AWARE® (1-800-462-9273).

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