

# PRESSRELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## **Pink Ribbon Sunday is October 17**

**Michigan City, IN** (September 22, 2004) – If you believe that early detection of breast cancer saves lives, Pink Ribbon Sunday is a program you'll want to embrace.

Pink Ribbon Sunday is a public education program which encourages churches to educate their congregations about the use of mammography equipment as an early breast cancer detection tool.

Zora Brown, founder and chair of the Breast Cancer Resource Committee in Washington, D.C., said in a letter about the event, "As one of the 1.3 million breast cancer survivors in the United States today, I am a living testament to the power of early detection and treatment of this insidious disease. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women in the United States. Breast cancer had the highest number of new cases diagnosed last year."

Brown said that African American women are disproportionately affected by breast cancer and have a higher mortality rate as compared to non-minority women. "We believe this is because a larger percentage of African-American women are diagnosed with breast cancers at a later, less treatable stage. A mammogram is a safe, low-dose x-ray of the breast and reduces the risk of dying from breast cancer. It is important for women, particularly African-American women, to get a mammogram."

Lorena Fierro, a volunteer with the American Cancer Society (ACS), said in documents from ACS that Hispanic women, too, have a higher mortality rate from breast cancer than non-minority women. "Early detection significantly reduces the risk of dying from breast cancer. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), under the Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA), a federal law that makes sure every mammography site meets quality standards, ensures the safety and quality of all mammography equipment in the United States. Federal and local government health agencies and community organizations are vigorously responding to this issue. Faith-based and church-affiliated organizations are an excellent example of community organizations finding ways to effectively respond to such an important community issue."

To celebrate Pink Ribbon Sunday, churches develop their own activities, ranging from inspirational guest speakers to table displays and culturally-appropriate educational material. Over the years, support for this program has grown to include hundreds of thousands of women and their families.

“The Mayor’s Campaign Against Cancer supports Pink Ribbon Sunday,” said Mayor Chuck Oberlie. “In early September, we held a garden party at Barker Mansion for religious leaders in our community and provided them with packets of information on this event. The packets also included information on locations in LaPorte County where women who qualify financially may be eligible for free or reduced-cost mammograms through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.”

“Churches have always been a major source of education and support,” Mayor Oberlie said. “Today, more than 7 out of every 10 women belong to a place of worship. About one in eight U.S. women will get breast cancer during her lifetime. Our churches can help to get information to their congregation members...maybe even save a life.”

Religious leaders who were unable to attend the event at Barker Mansion are invited to pick up this free information from the Mayor’s Office Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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