



For Immediate Release

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Breast Cancer Emergency Fund to Expand Outreach to Underserved South Bay Communities

Priority is Raising Awareness Among Prospective Donors and Low-Income Women, Including Non-Native English Speakers

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.--Today, the Breast Cancer Emergency Fund (BCEF) announced that it will expand its outreach in the South Bay Area to raise awareness about its services to prospective donors and low-income individuals undergoing cancer care, especially non-native English speakers.

BCEF provides emergency financial support to low-income individuals battling breast cancer, enabling them to keep up vital medical treatments, avoid utility shut-off, prevent eviction, and maintain stable housing.

“The Breast Cancer Emergency Fund was started by the staff of the AIDS Emergency Fund (AEF) 15 years ago,” said Sandra Nathan, Executive Director of the two organizations, who led a nine-month organizational restructuring process. “As AEF now moves forward to merge with the Positive Resource Center, BCEF will continue to grow as a free-standing organization focused solely on providing a financial safety net for clients involved in breast cancer care.”

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Often low-income individuals are hourly-wage earners who are not paid if they are unable to work while undergoing cancer treatment. To date, BCEF has provided more than \$3 million in assistance to 2,500+ low-income women and their families.

“The rising income inequality in the region, coupled with high increases in rents, create extreme hardship for individuals and families coping with breast cancer,” said BCEF Board Chair Heather Renshaw Vučetin, “So many of our new clients are low-income women of color who have no other place to turn for help. Getting sick with cancer can be devastating for these women and for their families. At BCEF, we are committed to being there for the women who need us, and we are excited to move into this next phase of outreach and awareness to ensure that they can find us when they need us.”

To support this expanded outreach, BCEF has hired Cindy Chimal, a new bilingual client services manager. Chimal is a certified health education specialist and has worked in case management and counseling for clients in a number of organizations, including the Alum Rock Counseling Center, Tenderloin Housing Clinic and most recently as a Health Worker in the San Francisco Department of Public Health in the Housing and Urban Housing office.

“The emergency financial assistance that BCEF provides through its network of partners is a lifeline to clients,” said Nathan. “We will continue providing this vital support, while also raising awareness about BCEF services among low-income, non-native English speakers.”

According to the American Cancer Society, one in eight women in America will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime. Also, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among U.S. women.

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Foundations, fundraising activities, and corporate and individual donations fund BCEF. The organization provides immediate, compassionate emergency financial support, usually in two to five days.

The 2016 report by the Cancer Prevention Institute of California revealed that from 2009 through 2013, there were 156,292 new cases of cancer diagnosed in the Greater Bay Area. The five most common invasive cancer sites in the Greater Bay Area were breast, prostate, lung and bronchus, colorectal, and melanoma. These cancers accounted for over half of all newly diagnosed cases.

“The Breast Cancer Emergency Fund is an important resource for Latinas battling cancer in Santa Clara County,” said Ysabel Duron, Executive Director, Latinas Contra Cancer. “We look forward to working closely with BCEF to raise awareness about this support.”

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