

The Wellness Community Awarded \$2.4 Million Breast Cancer Grant by National Philanthropic Trust

**Grant to fund breast cancer caregivers education
campaign; new Senior Director, Caregiving Programs**

Washington, DC (September 15, 2008) - The Wellness Community (TWC), the nation's leader in providing empowering support and educational programs for people with cancer and their loved ones, has received a \$2.4 million breast cancer grant commitment from National Philanthropic Trust (NPT). The grant commitment will be used to create and launch a model, comprehensive breast cancer caregiver program, with an accompanying public awareness campaign.

“For more than 26 years, The Wellness Community has offered people living with cancer free social and emotional support programs that promote a better quality of life,” said Kim Thiboldeaux, President & CEO of The Wellness Community, headquartered in Washington, D.C. “We’ve learned that providing this support has social and economic implications that positively impact the workforce and the health care system. We are grateful to National Philanthropic Trust for their vision in furthering these impactful programs.”

The Wellness Community is also pleased to announce that it recently hired Ashley Varner, MBA, MSW as Senior Director, Caregiving Programs. “Ashley’s experience in oncology social work will allow her to be a tremendous asset to TWC’s breast cancer caregiver campaign and the organization overall,” Ms. Thiboldeaux said.

The \$2.4 million NPT grant will support a comprehensive, multi-faceted education and public awareness campaign to

empower breast cancer caregivers to be more effective in delivering care, reduce their own distress, and find resources so they are not alone during any stage of the cancer experience. This ground-breaking program will impact thousands of breast cancer caregivers nationwide. Initiatives will include workshops, materials, educational modules and an online community for caregivers. Similar to The Wellness Community's hallmark *Patient Active*[™] concept, the *Caregiver Active*[™] approach will empower the caregiver with tools to become more confident in their caregiving role.

“The Wellness Community has demonstrated a strong track record of successful support group programs, education, publications, and online communities that empower people dealing with cancer,” said Eileen R. Heisman, President & CEO of National Philanthropic Trust. “We look forward to observing the ripple effect this grant will make in supporting breast cancer patients and caregivers across the country.”

There are currently 12 million cancer survivors in the United States, in addition to the millions of people undergoing active cancer treatment. The tens of millions of caregivers who support loved ones who are newly diagnosed, battling the disease, or recovering from it, need support themselves. TWC researches quality of life issues, access and barriers to care, treatment and compliance, and the cost-effectiveness of various approaches to care for all types of cancer patients and survivors. TWC hopes that the initiative funded by the NPT breast cancer grant will eventually be expanded to assist those with other types of cancers.

In May 2007, TWC conducted a survey in conjunction with KRC Research about the stress associated with caregiving. Of the caregivers, 80 percent said they personally experienced regular stress and anxiety throughout the cancer experience. As cancer becomes more of a chronic disease, with treatment provided on an outpatient basis and at home, there is a

growing burden on the caregiver.

About Ashley Varner Prior to joining TWC as a Senior Director, Caregiving Programs Ashley Varner, served as a Senior Clinical Social Worker at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, where she worked since 2003. Prior to that position, Ms. Varner served as the Manager of Patient Support Services at Atlanta Cancer Care. She is the co-founder and former Director of the Atlanta Care Foundation and served as the primary co-investigator for three major research grants while at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

“I am excited to join The Wellness Community because it is the leader in providing psychosocial services for cancer patients and their loved ones,” Varner said. “Nationally, The Wellness Community is at the forefront of psychosocial support services that are vital to cancer patients and their loved ones. My experience in oncology social work programs and my belief that treatment of the whole patient and support system is needed will allow me to contribute to the exciting work The Wellness Community does.”

Ms. Varner is a former member of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Ethics Service, and a former Board Member of the Association of Oncology Social Work. She was named the 2008 Neuro-oncology Social Worker of the Year by the National Brain Tumor Foundation. Ms. Varner received her MBA from Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business, her MSW from Smith College School for Social Work, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology from Bryn Mawr College, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude.

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ABOUT THE WELLNESS COMMUNITY Founded in 1982, The Wellness Community is an international non-profit organization dedicated to providing free support, education and hope to people with cancer and their loved ones. Through participation in professionally-led support groups, educational workshops, nutrition and exercise programs, and stress-reduction classes, people affected by cancer learn vital skills that enable

them to regain control, reduce isolation and restore hope regardless of the stage of their disease. The Wellness Community provides such programs, free of charge at more than 100 locations worldwide including 24 U.S. based and 2 international centers with 73 satellite and off-site programs and online at www.thewellnesscommunity.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PHILANTHROPIC TRUST National Philanthropic Trust (NPT) is an independent public charity dedicated to promoting and facilitating charitable giving by individuals, families and organizations while expanding their knowledge in the field of philanthropy. Founded in 1996, NPT is among the 100 largest charities and one of the top 35 grant makers in the United States with \$725 million in assets under management. Since its inception, NPT has raised over \$1.3 billion in charitable assets, and made over 25,000 grants to U.S. and international charities totaling \$715 million. NPT is led by a national board of trustees and a team of professionals with more than 200 years of philanthropic experience. For more information, visit www.nptrust.org.

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