



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF
BREAST CANCER ACTIVISM

Annual Report

July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS



Dear Friends,

Thanks to your commitment and support, Breast Cancer Action's enduring advocacy campaigns and educational programs are making a difference. We are creating systemic changes that are altering the course of the breast cancer epidemic.

In 2010-2011 we honored 20 years of breast cancer activism and made significant progress in key areas including protecting patients' interests, decreasing environmental links to breast cancer, advancing our work to address health inequities and providing essential education and referral services to women across the country. Our Milking Cancer and Think Before You Pink® campaigns challenged pinkwashers and mobilized hundreds of activists to take action. And of course, we bid farewell to Barbara Brenner after 15 years of fabulous leadership.

Belle Shayer, one of the remaining living founders of Breast Cancer Action recently offered us her thoughts on the breast cancer movement over the last 20 years:

What has not changed is that same fear, panic, and confusion upon hearing a diagnosis of breast cancer. The fear and frustration that no matter what you do, you may have a recurrence and that it's totally beyond your control. What has changed is people are no longer afraid to speak out and come forward to support those diagnosed and to demand the changes that will end this epidemic once and for all.

Belle's words capture so simply why Breast Cancer Action exists.

We exist because despite gains in recent decades, more than 230,000 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with breast cancer annually and approximately 40,000 women will die this year of the disease. A

disproportionate number of those who die will be women of color. We exist because breast cancer is an epidemic which requires us both to address the needs of women living with the disease and to work to stop breast cancer before it starts.

As we chart our course ahead, we remain committed to our enduring priorities of:

- Putting patients before profit, by shifting the balance of power at the FDA and providing unbiased information for women
- Creating healthy communities, by eliminating involuntary exposures to toxins and working to stop breast cancer before it starts
- Addressing and eliminating the social inequities women of color and low income women face in breast cancer diagnoses, treatment, and mortality rates

Thank you for standing with BCAction to address and end the breast cancer epidemic. We are proud to lead this legacy of success that you have made possible.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Karuna Jaggar in black ink.

Karuna Jaggar
Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Tracy Weitz in black ink.

Tracy Weitz
Board Chair

Celebrating the Activists

At the end of 2010, Breast Cancer Action (BCAction) celebrated its 20th anniversary by honoring breast cancer activists from across the nation — many of whom were able to be with us, many of whom were not. All who attended were people like you who feel

compelled to challenge the status quo in breast cancer. We were joined by activists who have become leaders in their field and have committed their professional lives to changing the conversation around breast cancer. Honorees included author and activist Annie Lamott, social

commentator Barbara Ehrenreich, public health advocate Rachel Morello-Frosch, and Belle Shayer, BCAction's only remaining living founder. We were also privileged to honor organizations whose work exemplifies BCAction's priorities. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* has continued to put patients before corporate profits. *Pesticide Action Network North America* is a leader in reducing involuntary exposure to toxins in the environment. *California Latinas for Reproductive Justice* works to create better health outcomes for Latina women within a social justice framework. We were inspired by all the activists and partner organizations who attended and are honored to count such people among our friends. We are deeply grateful for all their support over the past 20 years and cannot express our gratitude enough to our longtime supporters. Thank you.



Honoring Barbara Brenner

Barbara Brenner, BCAction's executive director from 1995–2010, retired at the end of 2010. As executive director, Barbara built this organization into one that changed the conversation about breast cancer, urging an entire movement to focus less on

awareness and more on actions to bring about the systemic changes needed to address and end this epidemic. She injected into the breast cancer movement a sense of anger, urgency, and accountability, and she made sure that the voices and needs of patients always remained at the forefront of the work conducted by this organization. She pushed tirelessly and fearlessly for the world to recognize that we need to stop the disease from developing in the first place and demanded access to affordable treatments that actually work for all women living with the disease. Even

in retirement, Barbara remains a fierce health activist and a force to be reckoned with. Thank you, Barbara, for leading us and showing us that change happens when we demand it, together.

Welcoming BCAction Executive Director Karuna Jaggur

Karuna Jaggur joined BCAction in March 2011 with a dedication to ending the breast cancer epidemic that is fueled by a commitment to social justice and by her experiences over the last decade as a patient advocate for her closest family members as they grappled with three breast cancer diagnoses. Under her leadership, BCAction remains uncompromising on issues of health, social, and environmental justice.

We continue to:

- fearlessly and relentlessly tell the truth about breast cancer;
- unapologetically place the health rights of all women front and center of this epidemic, insisting that patients come before profits;
- relentlessly address the larger systemwide factors responsible for the continuation of this epidemic and insist on health policies that protect us all, rather than putting the burden of cancer prevention on individual lifestyle “choices;”
- change the conversation by demanding an end to involuntary exposure to breast cancer-linked toxins in everyday products.

For the last 15 years, Karuna worked in nonprofit leadership advocating for women’s social and economic empowerment. As the East Bay executive director for Women’s Initiative for Self Employment, her focus was to reverse inequities among low-income women and women of color. We are thrilled to work with her and are inspired daily by her commitment and integrity. We look forward to the future accomplishments our work together will achieve.

Carrying the Voices

BCAction exists to carry the voices of women affected by breast cancer to challenge assumptions and inspire change. By magnifying your voices, we bring the realities of breast cancer to the forefront of the world at large. We know that people with breast cancer, those who care for them and women

at risk of the disease need impartial, science-based answers to questions about breast cancer prevention, detection, care, and treatment. Our Information and Referral service empowers and supports people like you with unbiased information and assists them in making their own decisions based on their values and priorities. All of our policy efforts, programs, and campaigns are informed by your voices, so that together we can exert the necessary changes to address and end this epidemic.



This year we delivered honest, unbiased information and education as part of our ongoing work to empower and support women living with breast cancer,

caregivers, and those at risk of this disease:

- We launched a monthly educational webinar series focused on current issues related to understanding breast cancer and the systemic changes necessary to end this disease. Webinars focus on issues related to breast cancer and the environment, health inequities, pinkwashing, and advocacy training. Many will feature guest speakers who are experts in their field. The webinars are free to the public and available for download through the BCAction website. the health rights of all women front and center of this epidemic, insisting that patients come before profits;
- BCAction carried the patient and advocate perspective to the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium. Our presence at such conferences – where patients are not infrequently referred to as tumor “hosts” – serves as a critical reminder that research needs to be patient-centered and grounded in the relevance of women’s lives and personal experiences as well as science. Articles on various conference workshops can be found at www.bcaction.org.

- We produced three updated factsheets: *The Facts and Nothing But the Facts*, *What to Do When Someone You Know Has Been Diagnosed With Breast Cancer*, and *What You Should Know About the Environment and Breast Cancer*.

We continued to increase our membership, broaden our reach, and

deepen our relationships with members through all our media and communication channels. This year:

- Our following on Facebook increased from 5,420 to over 8,704 (60.5%), and our Twitter following jumped from 1,919 to over 3,776 (97%).
- Each e-alert provided timely information on health-related and newsworthy issues to over 22,112 people.
- Three issues of BCAction’s newsletter, *The Source*, were delivered to over 35,000 people between July 2010 and June 2011. *The Source* provides in-depth analysis of hot topics. Recent editions have focused on the need for systemic change to address and end the breast cancer epidemic, gene patenting, and drug approvals, and have also included member perspectives and personal stories. It is available both digitally on our website and in hard copy format.

“As a Latina BRCA2 BC ‘survivor,’ I am OUTRAGED at Myriad’s claim to ‘ownership’ of my genetic makeup.”

– BCAction Supporter

- Our information and referral service provided support to approximately 750 individual inquiries about breast cancer issues from around the country.
- Our program staff presented information on “The Politics of Breast Cancer” to community education and women’s health classes and organizations across the San Francisco Bay area, including Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Clinic, Diablo Valley College, City College of San Francisco, and San Francisco State University.

Putting Patients First

Breast Cancer Action is an independent voice for people affected by breast cancer. We put the needs of women with breast cancer before pharmaceutical and corporate profits. We review the science from the patient’s perspective in order to provide women affected by breast cancer with solid information so that they have the resources they need to make their own decisions based on their values and priorities.

Our work to put patients first focuses on the drug approval process at the FDA, specifically on shifting the balance of power away from the pharmaceutical industry and toward more effective and less toxic breast cancer treatments. Our independence from pharmaceutical company funding gives us the license and the power to advance this ambitious goal. And your commitment and ongoing participation in our efforts to demand change make our endeavors successful.

Highlights from this year include:

- In the ongoing action to reclaim our genes, BCAction remains the only national breast cancer organization named as a plaintiff in the ACLU suit challenging Myriad Genetics’ patent on the BRCA1 & 2 genes (commonly known as “the breast cancer genes”). During 2010–11, the New York federal court ruled that the patents on the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes were invalid. The



appeals court ruled that companies can obtain patents on the genes but cannot patent methods to compare those gene sequences.

- To broaden the reach of our work and highlight its international relevance for women across the globe, Barbara Brenner gave a television interview promoting the case and Breast Cancer Action’s unique role in the Myriad Gene Patenting lawsuit for a *60 Minutes*–like program funded by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) called *Four Corners: Body Corporate*.
- As part of our commitment to stay current, we review emerging science data. So when the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force revised its breast cancer screening guidelines, we formed a Screening Policy Task Force to examine and review *all* the evidence. BCAction’s updated screening policy and recommendations were released in July 2010 and are available at www.bcaction.org.
- In June, BCAction testified at the FDA hearing on Avastin, arguing that women with metastatic breast cancer desperately need treatment options that actually work and are safe. BCAction insisted that the FDA follow the science on Avastin. Trials for the drug as a treatment for metastatic breast cancer consistently failed to show overall survival benefit and often generated serious and sometimes life-threatening side effects in those taking it. In keeping with our recommendation, the FDA revoked approval of Avastin as a treatment for metastatic breast cancer.
- The FDA’s Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee (ODAC) approved the nomination of BCAction’s former board member Jane Zones as the consumer representative. Jane will not represent

“Thanks [for your work on Avastin]. As a physician myself, I expect scientific precision; as a patient, I want the best standard of care.”

– BCAction supporter

BCAction on the committee, but we are thrilled to have a patient advocate with a proven track record for following the science and who we can all trust to put the needs of patients first.

BCAction also partners with organizations to advance regulatory and legal reform that addresses the root causes of this disease and creates systemic change. To this end, over the last 12 months we supported:

- Prescription Access Litigation led efforts to reform “direct-to-consumer advertising” on prescription medication that will ensure *all* language is clear, easy to understand, and consumer friendly.
- Federal legislation authored by California Senator Dianne Feinstein that amends the Food Safety Modernization Act, banning BPA from baby bottles, infant formula cans, sippy cups, and baby food jars. Currently, the food safety bill addresses only foodborne contaminants such as E. coli and salmonella, leaving out endocrine-disrupting chemicals like BPA that leach out of containers into food.
- The Patient, Consumer, and Public Health Coalition regarding:
 - appeals to 12 federal lawmakers regarding recalled medical devices that have put patient safety at risk. FDA Working Group’s recommended changes to the 510(k) medical device clearance process supporting more careful reviews of 510(k) cleared devices to ensure they are safe and effective.
 - user fees for generic drugs in order to provide the FDA with adequate funding to address the backlog of nearly 2,000 generic drug applications.
 - an appeal to the director of the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health demanding the improvement of medical device safety.
 - an appeal to FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research regarding the Prescription Drug User Fee Act reauthorization process.

- Opposition to H.R. 10, the regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act, introduced by Congressman Geoff Davis, which would require Congress to approve all new major regulations before they can take effect.
- Amicus curiae brief organized by the Center for American Progress in the case *State of Florida v. United States Department of Health and Human Services*.
- Amicus brief filed by the Center for American Progress in January in the Sixth Circuit case challenging the Affordable Care Act, *Thomas More Law Center v. Obama*, which considered the merits of the act's constitutionality.

Creating Healthy Environments

BCAction works to decrease the involuntary exposures to toxins in the environment that place people at risk of breast cancer. We work to ultimately bring about regulatory and legal reform of toxic and hazardous chemicals so we can address the root causes of this disease and create systemic solutions. Currently, conclusive evidence of a chemical's toxicity is required before a hazardous product is banned. However, when it comes to testing the impact of environmental toxins on humans, many of us often find ourselves in a catch-22 situation. Scientists cannot perform research that involves randomized trials of toxic chemicals on human subjects, and yet legislators require this kind of conclusive evidence before they are prepared to regulate substances that are linked to breast cancer.

Demanding improved testing takes time and resources. BCAction insists that regulatory systems simultaneously adopt the Precautionary Principle

“Awareness without action is a waste of consciousness and money. Breast Cancer Action is rightly focused on the environmental drivers that cause many cancers... vs. some elusive pretty-in-pink cure.”

– BCAction supporter

to public health — a proactive prevention-oriented approach to prohibit the licensing of chemicals until they are proven safe. In order to stop cancer before it starts, BCAction believes that as much time and money should be spent on researching root causes as has been spent developing treatments. Both are essential to addressing and ending this epidemic.

Our local and national environmental work this year has focused on strengthening and expanding our partnerships to effect broad systemic change in the following areas:

- BCAction served on the advisory group of the Breast Cancer Mapping Project, a project of the California Environmental Health Tracking Program, California Department of Public Health. This project focuses on using innovative statistical models to create breast cancer census-tract-level disease maps to provide useful information for communities.
- In partnership with the CHANGE coalition (Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy), BCAction opposed the approval of methyl iodide, attending the California State Senate hearing at the capitol and mobilizing 1,400 members to take action via an e-mail campaign targeting the Department of Pesticide Regulation. When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed to reopen its national decision to public comment, BCAction urged it to suspend all registrations for methyl iodide. We await a final decision from the EPA.
- BCAction offered testimony about the environmental concerns to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) panel charged with producing a report on “Breast Cancer and the Environment.” We directly requested that any policy recommendations focus on systemic opportunities for prevention and refrain from placing the burden for prevention with individual choice, which consistently leaves underserved communities at a disadvantage. This report was funded by Susan G. Komen and scheduled for release in December 2011.

- Alongside the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, we successfully defeated Proposition 23, a Texas-oil initiated California ballot to repeal California clean air laws, which would have hurt low-income communities of color who are disproportionately affected by toxic exposure.
- BCAction provided oral testimony in support of the San Francisco Nail Salon Recognition Ordinance during a public hearing to establish a voluntary recognition program for salon owners who stop using products that contain the “Toxic Trio”: DBP, formaldehyde, and toluene.

Together, we make change happen, because you demand it!

Think Before You Pink®

Think Before You Pink® is a project of Breast Cancer Action, now in its 10th year and launched in response to growing concern over the number of pink ribbon products and promotions on the market. The campaign calls for more transparency and accountability by companies that take part in breast cancer fundraising and encourages consumers to ask critical questions about pink ribbon promotions. In October 2010, in an effort to counter all the pink noise that distracts people from the realities of this disease, BCAction put our social media tools to work in high gear:

- We launched the Think Before You Pink® blog as a resource to educate, empower, and mobilize activists. The blog is maintained by staff writers and regularly features guest bloggers and activists from across the country living with breast cancer.
- Barbara Brenner and BCAction are featured in a documentary developed by the National Film Board of Canada, based on the book *Pink*

Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy, which features BCAction’s Think Before You Pink® campaign. The producers frame the issue of breast cancer through a feminist and social justice lens, and the film uncovers the hypocrisy and exposes the failings of the pink ribbon. The film premieres in the United States in 2012.

- We continue to be the “go to” organization for members of the press writing about pink-ribbon cause marketing across the nation. Our Think Before You Pink® campaign received extended media coverage from radio to print to TV, including National Public Radio, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Seattle Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, Salon, Huffington

Post, AOL, Yahoo News, MSNBC, and FOX TV, among many others. This year our response to the particularly egregious pink ribbon alcohol campaigns touched a retail nerve that catapulted BCAction into the limelight. We held tightly to the mouthpiece and talked about prevention, cause marketing, and corporate profiteering in breast cancer.



- BCAction created the Think Before You Pink® Toolkit to serve as a resource filled with concrete tips and practical tools to help consumers understand the conflicts surrounding pink ribbon marketing. In our efforts to better prepare and equip advocates with the education and training they need to challenge “pinkwashers” year-round, BCAction plans to distribute the Think Before You Pink® Toolkit to 10,000 people by June 30, 2012.

Milking Cancer

The goal of 2010's Milking Cancer Campaign was to increase our campaign's visibility across the nation, and we succeeded.

The campaign had a single message:

"Eli Lilly is making us sick. Stop them." We urged people to sign an electronic petition demanding Eli Lilly stop manufacturing the artificial stimulant, recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), which increases milk production in dairy cows and is linked to breast cancer. This highly successful campaign included:



- Over 6,732 signatures, surpassing our goal of 6,220 signatures (one signature for every day that rBGH has been on the market).
- Our first blog press conference, which we recorded and publicized to social media activists who were unable to attend but interested in expanding the reach and impact of the campaign
- A billboard campaign that was to feature the words "*Eli Lilly is making us sick. Stop them*" on a billboard in Indianapolis, the location of Eli Lilly's headquarters; however, this was thwarted when we were denied billboard space because our message was deemed "too political."
- Sending out a press release regarding our denied billboard campaign that was picked up by the local NPR affiliate and the *Indianapolis Star* as well as the United Press International (UPI) and the Associated Press (AP). This coverage got our message out more effectively than any billboard ad could have and at no financial cost to us!
- A Facebook campaign called "Be the billboard" which urged activists across the nation to post a photo mock-up of the billboard (including its message) in their personal picture space.

Eliminating Social Inequities

True prevention of breast cancer requires a better understanding of how the complex tangle of environmental, political, economic and social factors, genetics, and personal behavior results in different outcomes for different ethnic and economic groups. Latina and African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women when diagnosed at a similar age and stage, and low-income women diagnosed with the disease tend to have poorer health outcomes than their higher-income peers. All of our work is focused through a social justice lens to highlight the unequal ways in which underserved communities experience this disease so we can understand and address the root causes of inequities in breast cancer.

- Stopping the manufacturing of rBGH is important, because as organic products gain popularity in the United States, the larger factory farms that continue to use rBGH are able to sell less expensive rBGH-treated milk in low-income communities to people who can't access or afford to buy organic.
- We worked to ban methyl iodide, both because of its negative health effects and because those who work and live in closest proximity to this hazardous chemical are often members of underserved communities.
- Our work with California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative is keenly important, because the workers who are exposed to products containing "Toxic Trio" chemicals are, for the most part, women of color.

This year, BCAction addressed social inequities through our campaigns, our educational outreach services, and our partnerships. A few highlights include:

- Our collaboration with First Exposures, a photography mentoring organization for

underserved teens, where we educated young men and women on breast cancer and food



justice, environmental toxins, and health inequities, and co-hosted “Environmental Injustice: It Ain’t a Pretty Picture.”

- BCAction convened the first session of the Roundtable Discussion on Latinas and Breast Cancer in Oakland, California, in April 2011. Ten San Francisco Bay area organizations were represented at the meeting, which generated a rich discussion on many issues facing Latinas with breast cancer. With input from these leaders, BCAction is creating an activist agenda relevant to issues these providers have identified in their communities.
- Created a 36-month inequities program plan based on the findings of an internal taskforce on inequities and headed by board member Lauri Andress.
- Translated our most popular Fact Sheets into Spanish.
- Offering a series of four Spanish language presentations on the “Politics of Breast Cancer” to Mujeres Unidas y Activas in San Francisco.

Honors

October 2010: The Business Ethics Network (BEN) honored BCAction with a third place Path to Victory Award for our What the Cluck? campaign. This campaign called out the hypocrisy of the partnership

between Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). KFC locates its stores in the poorest communities, where people have limited access to healthy food. Despite its claim to care about low-income women, Komen partnered with a fast food corporation on a campaign likely to severely aggravate rather than improve the condition of women’s health in these communities.

Our Partners

Thanks to our national partners whose ongoing collaboration continues to extend the reach of our work across the United States and Canada, and helps us broaden our member base and make real the necessary systemic changes that will address and end this epidemic:

Institute for Responsible Technology; DES Action; Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition; Corporate Accountability International; Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility; Food and Water Watch; Healthy Child Healthy World; Allergy Kids Foundation, Our Bodies, Ourselves, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates; Pesticide Action Network North America; California Latinas for Reproductive Justice; Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition; First Exposures; the ACLU; the Public Patent Foundation; and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative.

Our Supporters

Thank you to all our generous donors and members. Without your generous support through these critical times, none of this work would have been possible. We have had an exceptional year and are excited to continue this work into 2012. We are also all highly aware that much remains to be done to create the necessary systemic changes that will address and end this epidemic. And with your continued involvement and support, we know we can do it. Thank you!

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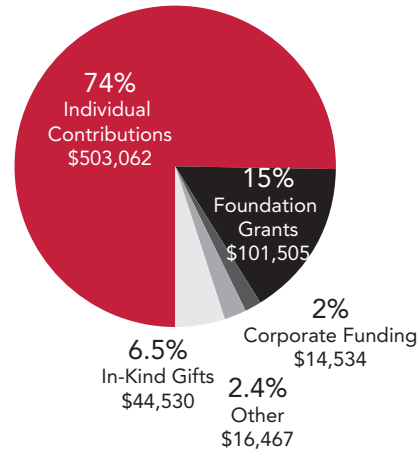
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2010/2011 Financial Statement

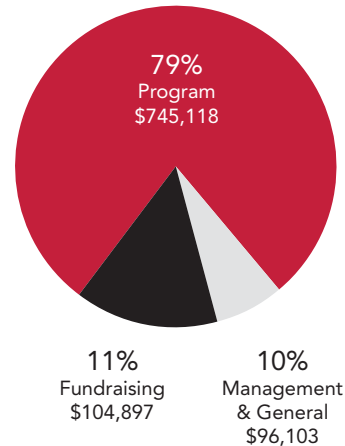
Revenue

Total: \$680,098



Expenses

Total: \$946,118



The financial information shown here was derived from Breast Cancer Action's audited financial statements. The difference between revenue and expenses in the fiscal year of 2010/2011 was covered by board designated net assets from reserve funds. Copies of the audited financial statements may be obtained by contacting BCAction.

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