

MISSION STATEMENT

Breast Cancer Action carries the voices of people affected by breast cancer to inspire and compel the changes necessary to end the breast cancer epidemic. We will not be bought, influenced or discouraged in our mission to eradicate breast cancer.

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IN MEMORIAM

This annual report is dedicated to the memory of BCA Board Member Lucy Sherak, who died of breast cancer in January, 1998, at age 43. Lucy designed BCA's "Cancer Sucks" pin, and knew far too well what those words mean. We mourn Lucy's passing, but continue to be inspired by her passion and spirit.

INTRODUCTION

ducation and advocacy. These words have been the hallmark of Breast Cancer Action (BCA) since it was founded in 1990. Before most people were willing to say "breast cancer," BCA was speaking out loudly and clearly about how little was known about the most common cancer in women. As the breast cancer

movement
has grown,
BCA has
continued to
serve as a leading voice,
demanding effective treatments
and true prevention.

We were among the first organizations in the country to raise our voices about the lifetime risk of developing breast cancer, which has increased from 1 in 20 in 1964 to 1 in 8 today. While research and the media have focused on lifestyle factors as the explanation for the increased incidence of breast cancer, BCA has stood in the forefront of those demanding that we examine the environmental links to the epidemic. And while the cancer charities promote mammograms as "your best protection," and confuse five-year survival with "cure," BCA tells the truth about the difference between prevention and detection, and between treatment and cure.

As we pierce through the hype and misinformation surrounding breast cancer, BCA also serves as an unparalleled resource, providing up-to-date, accurate information for people confronting the many difficult decisions that accompany a breast cancer diagnosis.

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of women who are diagnosed each year and those whose lives they touch, we are building the activism that will ultimately end the scourge of breast cancer. Our grassroots activities are giving people something to do besides worry about breast cancer — something that will add to the public pressure necessary to bring an end to this epidemic. BCA — taking action, creating change.

FROM THE BCA LEADERSHIP

ilitary analogies abound in the breast cancer movement, from the federally funded "War on Cancer" to personal "battles" against the disease. Viewed from that perspective, we spent much of our time in 1997 in the trenches. We saw every day the terror and devastation wrought by breast cancer and the courage and commitment of the people who struggle with the illness and work to find true cure and prevention. And we met activists — both with breast cancer and without — who believe as we at Breast Cancer Action do that the old way of doing business is not working.

The passion and commitment of the people who will not take "no" for an answer is awesome. The grassroots are teeming with the energy needed to halt the breast cancer epidemic. In 1997, BCA started to harness that energy by establishing task forces through which people can work together to create change: change in how the media reports on breast cancer, how the communities we live in understand the disease, how we care for our environment, how treatments are made available, and how our legislators approach breast cancer issues.

Every person diagnosed with breast cancer is entitled to complete, unbiased understandable information about treatment and to access to those treatments. But we also know that we cannot afford for the breast cancer epidemic to be stopped one woman at a time. We are deeply honored to lead Breast Cancer Action, an organization that understands these realities and that works both to provide information to individuals and to bring together the many people who, working together, will compel the changes necessary to end the epidemic.

The pages that follow recap our 1997 work. None of our remarkable accomplishments would have been possible without your support. All of us at BCA are profoundly grateful for your generosity. That generosity makes possible all that we do in taking action, creating change.

Karen L. Strauss

Karen L. Strauss

President

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Barbara A. Brenner Executive Director

Bartara A. Breune



THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

From its beginning, Breast Cancer Action has focused its energies in two areas: redirecting research priorities toward true prevention and cure, and empowering people to deal with the issues raised by a breast cancer diagnosis. These goals guided our education and advocacy work throughout 1997.

HOT TOPICS IN BREAST CANCER

Three topics dominated the breast cancer agenda in 1997: screening mammograms for women 40 to 49 years old, environmental links to breast cancer, and genetic testing for breast cancer susceptibility. On each of these topics, BCA made its voice heard, often against a din of misinformation.

Mammography screening for 40 - 49 year olds

The issue of whether women between the ages of 40 and 49 should have regular screening mammograms has long been controversial. During 1997, a Consensus Panel convened by the National Institutes of Health reasonably concluded that there was insufficient evidence to justify an across-the-board recommendation for all 40 to 49 year olds. The result was outrage: breast cancer survivors who believed their lives had been saved by mammograms, the director of the National Cancer Institute, large cancer organizations, and congressional representatives all insisted that, despite the lack of scientific evidence, frequent mammograms were essential. In the firestorm of controversy that erupted, BCA provided an honest, clear perspective on the limited benefits of mammography screening for pre-menopausal women and urged women to learn for themselves whether a mammogram would be useful. Media from Newsweek to USA Today, and from Hard Copy to local television stations sought BCA's views, enabling us to reach a wide audience with a viewpoint decidedly different from the American Cancer Society. A BCA "Perspective" for San Francisco public radio reached a large area with our approach to the issue. Our opinions were also sought by other breast cancer organizations throughout the country, and our policy position on mammography was adopted by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association.

Environmental Links to Breast Cancer

Not satisfied with the claim that the escalating incidence of breast cancer is explained simply by better detection through the increased use of mammograms, BCA continued to demand that the environmental links to the ever-growing incidence of breast cancer and other cancers be addressed in policy and research circles. We took action on a number of fronts linking breast cancer and the environment:

Produced, promoted and co-sponsored the premier of the ground-breaking film "Rachel's Daughters: Searching for the Causes of Breast Cancer." Several BCA board members participated in the film, which aired throughout October on HBO.

Became a founding member of the Health Care

Without Harm Campaign, which focuses on reducing the incineration of medical waste, a major source of dioxin contamination.



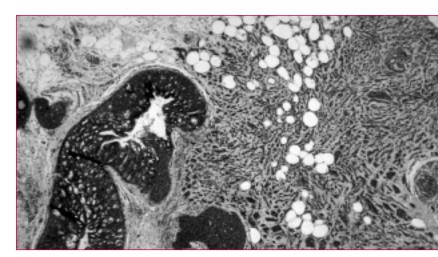
BCA works with Californians for Pesticide Reform to reduce pesticide use.

- Joined Californians for Pesticide Reform, a coalition dedicated to a rational strategy to reduce our exposure to pesticides.
- Endorsed the principles of the Zero Dioxin Campaign.
- Worked in coalition with others to oppose the development of a radioactive waste dump at Ward Valley, California.
- Endorsed the efforts of the Working Group on the Community Right-to-Know to demand a national data system for the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Plan.
- Urged Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi to lead the legislative effort to regulate medical waste incineration.
- Assisted Congresswoman Pelosi in developing questions about San Francisco Bay Area breast cancer rates and environmental links addressed to National Cancer Institute Director Richard Klausner.
- Protested U.S. Senate hearings on environmental links to cancer that excluded the views of breast cancer activists.
- Urged Senator Barbara Boxer to support funding to clean up California superfund sites.
- Protested the Department of Energy's threat to terminate efforts to study the links between electro–magnetic fields (EMF's) and cancer.
- Urged California policy makers to maintain the environmental health program of the Department of Health Services.
- Provided background information to the media on environmental links to breast cancer, including interviews to CNN and other television news programs in response to a widely misreported story that there was no link between breast cancer and DDT/PCB's.
- Informed BCA Newsletter readers on a wide range of issues related to environmental links to breast cancer and the environment: pesticides and the food supply; the petrochemical industry's use of public relations campaigns; medical waste incineration and the Health Care Without Harm Campaign; the publication of the sequel to Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, Sandra Steingraber's Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment; the backlash against environmentalism in the cancer movement; the World Conference on Breast Cancer; DDT, PCB's and breast cancer; and EMF exposure as a breast cancer risk factor.

GENETIC TESTING FOR BREAST CANCER SUSCEPTIBILITY

Commercial marketing of genetic tests for breast cancer susceptibility took off in 1997. The marketing of these tests continues to pose significant dangers to a public that is not well-informed about the benefits and risks of genetic testing. BCA's policy on genetic testing, which highlights the need to protect individuals and society against the many risks associated with genetic testing for breast cancer susceptibility, guided our extensive work on this issue in 1997. That work encompassed public education, public policy development, and activities directed at assuring that genetic testing programs are based on sound information:

- BCA provided public education on genetic testing issues through a well-attended public forum cosponsored by Golden Gate University's Women's Employment Rights Clinic. In addition to articles in our Newsletter, we contributed information to media outlets including Hippocrates Magazine, ABC Prime Time Live, Chilean television, MSNBC, Phoenix Magazine, the New York Times, and others. BCA also made numerous public presentations on genetic testing issues to organizations including the Florida Breast Cancer Network and American Jewish Congress, health care providers affiliated with Education Program Associates, the Annual Conference of the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association, and the Pacific Southwest Regional Genetics Network Conference.
- BCA worked to influence public policy on genetic testing issues at the state and federal levels. BCA's policy paper on genetic testing was cited by the California Legislature in calling special hearings on genetics and public policy and was adopted by Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. BCA Executive Director Barbara Brenner chaired the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer's Subcommittee on Response to Commercial Marketing of Genetic Tests, which developed a position paper on the ethical marketing of genetic testing.
- We worked with Kaiser Permanente, the country's largest health maintenance organization, to insure that their national guidelines for genetic counseling were grounded in reliable scientific information and written in a way that did not overstate the value of genetic testing. And we forced Kaiser to withdraw from participation in a national conference focused on genetic testing for profit.



Breast cancer cells result from the interaction of genes and the environment.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY ON OTHER BREAST CANCER ISSUES

While the hot topics dominated the breast cancer agenda in 1997, many other issues demanded our attention as well. Through media, legislative and research advocacy, and through our newsletter, community education efforts, and information services, BCA addressed a wide range of issues related to breast cancer.

Media Advocacy

Because so much of what people know about breast cancer is based on the media's presentation of the issues, BCA works to influence how the media covers breast cancer. We are often asked to serve as a resource for media stories, as our knowledge about and analysis of breast cancer issues is increasingly well known. BCA's voice reached a wide range of media outlets, including international, national, and local television; national and local radio; and national, regional and local print media.

In addition to our media work on the hot breast cancer topics of 1997, BCA provided expertise to the media on the following breast cancer issues: breast cancer vaccines, medical use of marijuana, breast cancer activism, insurance coverage of high dose chemotherapy/autologous bone marrow transplants, politicians' use of breast cancer issues, universal health care. lesbians and breast cancer. breast cancer treatments and the absence of "cure," compassionate access to Her2/neu therapy, federal legislative issues, breast reconstruction legislation, accurate reporting of breast cancer as a cause of death, breast cancer genetic discoveries, bone density and breast cancer risk, breast self exams and mammograms as "prevention," women of color and breast cancer, Bay Area breast cancer rates and "known risk factors." hormone replacement therapy and breast cancer, breast cancer mortality statistics, mammography, and prophylactic mastectomies.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Our reputation for thoughtful, incisive analysis of policy matters related to breast cancer frequently prompts California's legislators at the local, state, and federal levels to seek input from BCA. In 1997, legislators sought BCA's views and advice on initiatives that included tax checkoffs for health research and for breast cancer research, a national biomedical science award, independent review of insurance company denials of coverage for high dose chemotherapy/autologous bone marrow transplants, and genetic discrimination. Legislators at all levels of government also contacted BCA for information about breast cancer statistics and the scope of the breast cancer epidemic.

Legislators sought and, on occasion, received BCA's endorsement of bills related to breast cancer issues. Our major legislative activity in 1997 focused on passage of a "One Stop Shopping" provision for accessible information on cancer clinical trials. This 1997 law was formulated in response to Congressional testimony provided by BCA in 1996.

RESEARCH ADVOCACY

Bringing the voices of women diagnosed with breast cancer to the tables where decisions about the future directions of breast cancer research are made, BCA members served on peer review panels for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program and as advocate observers for the California Breast Cancer Research Program.

THE BCA NEWSLETTER

BCA's bi-monthly Newsletter is widely regarded as the best source of information on diagnosis, treatment, and the politics of breast cancer. Our unflinching commitment to accuracy, timeliness, and the clear presentation of breast cancer issues, and to letting people know what they can do to help end the breast cancer epidemic, led to many requests in 1997 for reprints of newsletter articles. The bi-monthly distribution of the newsletter increased by 53%, reaching over 3100 individuals and institutions throughout the world by the end of 1997.



BCA's pin, designed by Lucy Sherak, to whose memory this publication is dedicated.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Through our forums, workplace outreach efforts, and participation in events sponsored by others, BCA voices were heard from San Francisco to New Zealand and from Oakland to Canada as we educated people about the realities of breast cancer and motivated them to get involved in working to end the epidemic. Highlights of our 1997 community education activities include:

- Forum with author/ecologist Sandra Steingraber talking about her book Living Downstream, An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment (co-sponsored with Women's Cancer Resource Center and Mothers and Others for a Livable Planet).
- Workshop on the politics of breast cancer at the World Conference on Breast Cancer in Ontario, Canada.
- Panel discussion on pesticides and breast cancer at a public meeting of the Santa Rosa Sierra Club Toxics Committee.
- Presentation on the mammography controversy at the Mills College Christine LaFia Memorial Symposium on Young Women and Breast Cancer (co-sponsored with Mills College and the American Cancer Society).
- Educational evening on environmental links to breast cancer sponsored by the Bay Area Environmental Group.
- Community forum on the Politics of Breast Cancer sponsored by the Mendocino Cancer Resource Center.



Anne Lamott emceed BCA's 1997 Town Meeting with Joycelyn Elders.



Alice Wolfson, Esq.; Susan Kelly, Medical Ethicist; Beth Crawford, Genetics Counselor; Denah Joseph, therapist; and Lisa Bailey, M.D. were panel members at the BCA Genetics Forum.

- Presentations on breast cancer issues at high schools, community colleges, University of California School of Public Health, UCSF Medical School, San Francisco Smith College Club, Westside Community Mental Health Center, Oakland Homeless Center, University of California at San Francisco Clinical Trials Symposium, Charlotte Maxwell Clinic Retreat for Low-Income Women with Breast Cancer, and Metropolitan Community Church.
- Presentations to Kaiser Permanente Breast Cancer Liaison Group, American Cancer Society Cancer Control Group (California Unit), and California Breast Cancer Research Program Symposium.
- BCA tables at Santa Clara University Environmental Fair, San Jose Professional & Business Women's Conference, and Stanford University Women's Health Day.
- BCA Corporate Education Program presentations to employees at McKesson Corporation, Bayer Corporation, Pacific Bell, Hewlett Packard, and Charles Schwab & Company.

Information and Referral

The relentlessness of the breast cancer epidemic means that every day more people need information about diagnostic procedures, treatment protocols, and compassionate access to experimental therapies. During 1997, BCA filled thousands of requests for information that reached the agency by phone, fax, mail and e-mail. Many of these requests came from individuals struggling with diagnosis and treatment choices. Other regional, national, and international organizations addressing breast cancer issues also contacted BCA for information and for problem-solving ideas.

TAKING ACTION. CREATING CHANGE

THROUGH COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Breast Cancer Action's community organizing efforts were launched in 1997 with our first San Francisco Town Meeting for Breast Cancer Activists. Keynote speaker former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders set the tone for the day when she told the room full of activists to keep their eyes on the prize of prevention and cure and not to yield in our commitment to demanding the changes necessary to achieve these goals.

Five task forces grew out of the Town Meeting. Scores of willing and energetic volunteers now participate in the following Task Forces:

ACTION ALERT: mobilizes volunteers to write letters, make phone calls, send e-mails, or demonstrate in the streets when there are important developments related to breast cancer.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: focuses on presenting breast cancer information to people in businesses, schools, religious institutions, and other venues and works to connect with other community groups to increase awareness of the realities of the breast cancer epidemic.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION: monitors health care-related legislation at the local, state, and federal levels.

MEDIA RESPONSE: responds to press reports that misrepresent scientific evidence, distort the real-life experience of women, or otherwise perpetuate misinformation related to breast cancer.

TREATMENT ISSUES: follows drug and treatment developments and confronts policy makers at all levels about access to treatment for breast cancer.

By organizing people to confront the issues posed by the breast cancer epidemic, BCA allows people to do something — besides worry — about breast cancer, and hastens the day when we will be able to honestly say that our children will not have to face the horrors of this epidemic.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR THE FUTURE

BCA's ultimate goal is to end the breast cancer epidemic. For that to happen, the organization must grow to meet the challenges that face us now and in the immediate future. During 1997, BCA took major steps toward that growth, building the capacity we need to face the challenges ahead.

A strategic planning effort that involved BCA board and staff as well as community leaders has pointed us in the direction of organizational changes that will help us to grow effectively. Our newly developed Scientific Advisory Board, which includes leading scientists and medical professionals from around the country, will permit us to stay well-informed on the scientific issues related to breast cancer while we grow as an organization.

We expanded the financial resources to support our work in 1997. Our Men's Campaign Against Breast Cancer, led by a challenge grant from James C. Hormel, was an unqualified success, bringing both funds and new members to BCA. The support of thousands of generous individuals and of forward-looking foundations permitted us to add a new development position, to upgrade our computer systems, to expand the hours of the office and volunteer coordinator, and to take new office space to accommodate our growing staff.

The success of our 1997 fundraising efforts permitted us to commit a significant portion of our year-end surplus to future projects that will broaden our impact. These projects are highlighted in the accompanying financial information.

These resources permit us to look forward with confidence to a future in which people understand that ending the breast cancer epidemic requires the efforts of many minds, hands and hearts.



reast Cancer Action salutes the following individuals and institutions whose generosity makes our work possible. Those who provide financial support to BCA share our vision of a world without breast cancer. In addition to the generous sponsors listed below, BCA gratefully acknowledges its donors at all levels. Together, individual donors provide over half of the organization's annual budget.

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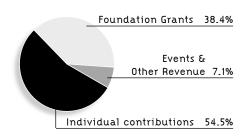
Julia Tower

John Tracey

San Francisco Women's Council of Realtors Collette Sell & Madeleine Ballard Silicon Reef Tits Up Productions — Allie Kirk & Christie McClelland

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

uring 1997, BCA's Board of Directors wisely chose to create a reserve fund that will permit us to continue our work even when times are hardest. That fund is reflected on the following financial statement. The financial statement also reflects the fact that because BCA's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year, most of our donations are received as we end our fiscal year. As a result, we typically have significant cash-on-hand as we enter a new year.



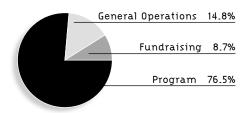
INCOME AND EXPENSES, 1997

INCOME

TIVOOTIL		
Individual Contributions	\$ 160,425	54.5%
Foundation Grants	112,845	38.4%
Events & Other Revenue	21,022	7.1%
TOTAL	\$ 294,292	100%

EXPENSES

Program	\$ 153,806	76.5%
General Operations	29,797	14.8%
Fundraising	17,401	8.7%
TOTAL	\$ 201,004	100%



EXPENSES

INCOME

BALANCE SHEET, DECEMBER 31, 1997

Apprip

TOTAL ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 106,295
Certificates of Deposit	40,816
Prepaid Expenses	1,771
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$ 148,882
Fixed assets, net of	
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	10 513
accumulated depreciation	10,512

\$ 159,394

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Total Current Liabilities		0
Net Assets—Board Designated		
3-month cash reserve	\$	60,000
Saber Es Poder (Spanish information project)		24,500
Capital expense: telephone system		6,500
Media Campaign		20,000
Net Assets — Unrestricted		48,394
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$	159,394

A copy of Breast Cancer Action's 1997 audited financial statement is available on request.

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

(Organizations listed for identification purposes only)

Wendell Brunner, M.D., Ph.D. Director of Public Health Contra Costa County California

Beth Crawford Genetics Counselor UCSF/Mt. Zion Medical Center

Phillip S. Gardiner, Dr. PH Tobacco Related Disease Research University of California

Sandra R. Hernández, M.D. Director and Chief Executive Officer The San Francisco Foundation

Stefanie Jeffries, M.D. Stanford University Medical Center

Mary-Claire King, Ph.D.
Division of Medical Genetics
University of Washington

Janice Kirsch, M.D.
Occupational & Environmental Medicine Fellow
University of California

Sally Savitz, L.Ac. Medical Director Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Clinic

> Carol P. Somkin, Ph.D. Sociologist Kaiser Foundation Research Institute

> > Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D. Ecologist/Poet

Mary S. Wolff, Ph.D.
Professor
Mount Sinai School of Medicine



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Breast Cancer Action 55 New Montgomery, Suite 323 San Francisco, CA 95105

