



**ANNUAL REPORT 1999**

Turning  
Knowledge  
Into  
Power

In 1999, while people around the globe took the end of the millennium as an opportunity to look back, Breast Cancer Action continued to look forward. With our energies focused on the fight ahead, we were fully engaged in the efforts that will bring us closer to our vision of the future: a world in which policy makers act quickly to regulate environmental toxins, individuals are well informed and active in their own health care decisions, and every person with breast cancer is guaranteed compassionate and comprehensive treatment.

Achieving these goals requires, first and foremost, informing the public about the realities of breast cancer. By sharing our knowledge with our members and others, we empower them to help effect the changes necessary to end the breast cancer epidemic.

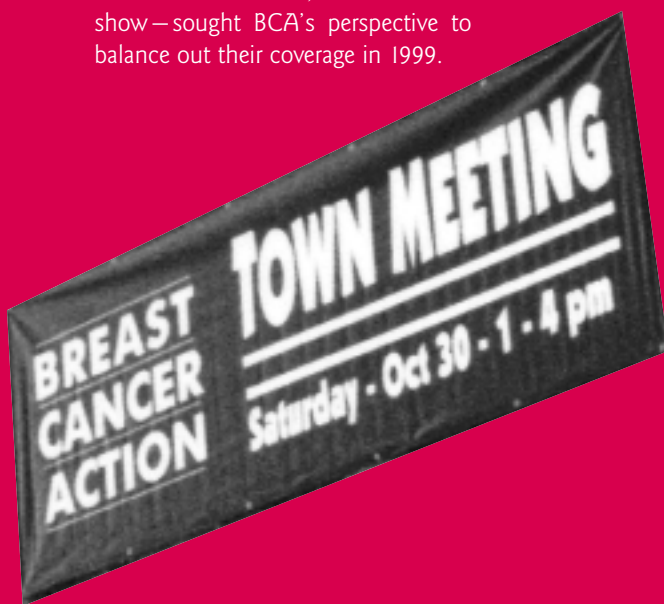


# Sharing Knowledge

The core of Breast Cancer Action's work has always been education and information. In 1999, Breast Cancer Action reached thousands of people who wanted or needed information about breast cancer.

BCA developed a series of fact sheets this year to help the public understand various aspects of the disease, including known risk factors, facts and figures, and mammography. In addition to informing BCA members about policy positions taken by the organization, articles in our bimonthly newsletter presented reliable information on a wide range of topics. Newsletter distribution increased by more than 30% this year, and we granted numerous requests to reprint newsletter articles. We hear from readers over and over again that the newsletter is a lifeline, providing reliable information, thoughtful analysis, and calls to action that inspire readers to get involved in the breast cancer movement.

BCA also serves as a valuable resource for reporters whenever breast cancer makes headlines. Media outlets—including the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, *USA Today*, NBC NIGHTLY NEWS, and the TODAY show—sought BCA's perspective to balance out their coverage in 1999.



# Empowering the Community

By providing information, Breast Cancer Action empowers people to become involved in their own treatment decisions and to join us in working to end the epidemic. BCA is a membership-based organization that depends on the involvement of grassroots activists throughout the country and around the world. Our principle community organizing event in 1999 was our THIRD ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, featuring economist Julianne Malveaux and author Anne Lamott. Hundreds of people gathered to hear Dr. Malveaux's inspiring call to consider and work to change the ways in which corporations profit from the breast cancer epidemic, as well as Lamott's wry commentary on how the loss of her best friend—who died of breast cancer at age 37—continues to motivate her activism.

BCA also worked with other community-based organizations in San Francisco to co-sponsor Town Halls in the underserved neighborhoods of

Bayview/Hunters Point and the Western Addition. In addition, we organized a training session, entitled *Telling Our Truths, Taking Action*, to develop outreach efforts to individuals from diverse communities.

BCA's community organizing is built on the idea that everybody can do something that matters about the breast cancer epidemic. Hundreds of people participated in our grassroots task forces—Media Response, Community Outreach, Audre Lorde Action Brigade, Legislative Action, and Treatment and Scientific Issues—in 1999.

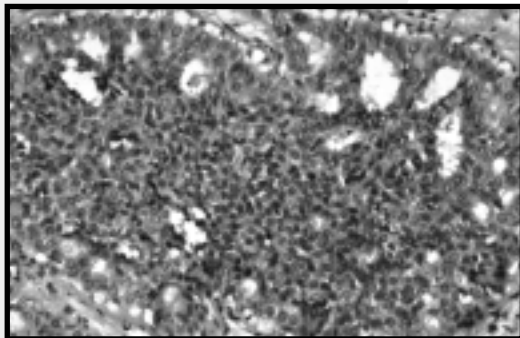
Much of our work centered around four issues in 1999: redirecting breast cancer research and policy; making environmental health a priority; ensuring quality access to care for everyone; and exposing the corporate stake in the breast cancer epidemic.

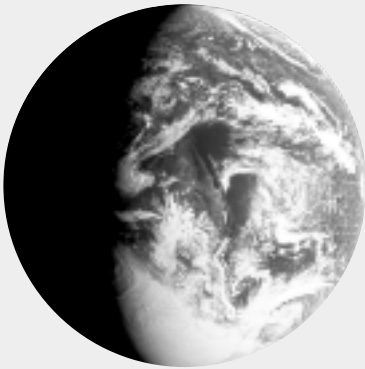


# Cancer Research and Policy

Government-funded cancer research is primarily focused on molecular biology and genetics. But because something must make our genes go haywire to prompt the development of cancer, such research can, at best, solve only half of the equation necessary to understand the causes of breast cancer. BCA worked to revamp the research agenda in 1999 by urging a change in the direction of research toward a more useful and effective approach to breast cancer:

- Successfully demanded that the National Cancer Institute promptly release trial results of the extremely painful and costly breast cancer treatment commonly referred to as bone-marrow transplant
- Called for women not to participate in the NCI's STAR (Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene) trial, which pits two potentially dangerous drugs against each other without using a placebo arm to determine whether taking either is better than taking neither in terms of risks and benefits
- Provided input to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) regarding pills for the "prevention" of breast cancer, and called on ASCO to increase the scope of its outreach to the advocacy community
- Represented the voices and perspectives of women with breast cancer through participation in the breast cancer research programs run by the State of California and the federal Department of Defense
- Provided information to activists outside of California to facilitate efforts to develop their own state research programs
- Presented testimony to the Food and Drug Administration on issues ranging from the agency's failure to approve a safer form of a commonly used chemotherapy agent to the importance of assuring that new drugs approved for breast cancer treatment improve overall survival or patient quality of life, or reduce costs
- At the request of the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer, provided an activist perspective on the direction of breast cancer research at conferences on issues ranging from the architecture of breast tissue to early life exposures and breast cancer risk
- Served on the advisory board of the Breast Cancer Risk Factors Research Project on lesbian and heterosexual women, which has begun to explore whether certain breast cancer risk factors might be more common among lesbians





# Environmental Health

Recognizing that true prevention will come only through understanding and eliminating the causes of breast cancer, Breast Cancer Action continued to seek to make environmental health a priority as research and policy decisions were made on both a state and federal level in 1999:

- Urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to consider the impact on women and children when determining exposure standards for 1,3 butadiene, a common air pollutant
- Successfully joined with our allies in the environmental movement to urge California's governor to appoint a non-industry representative to head the state's Environmental Protection Agency
- Through coalition work with Californians for Pesticide Reform, Health Care Without Harm, the Toxic Links Coalition, and the Zero Dioxin Campaign, urged increased public attention and action on the link between environmental harm and human health
- Campaigned to redirect some of the funds raised through the sale of the breast cancer stamp to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, where they would be used to investigate the environmental causes of breast cancer
- Urged the director of the National Cancer Institute to fund research on cancer and the environment
- Participated on the Pollution Prevention Advisory Board of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- Designed and presented a poster session on the precautionary principle of public health at the 1999 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, the largest scientific meeting of the year focused on breast cancer

## BCA FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1999

REVENUES	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Individual Contributions	\$ 296,230	58.0%
Foundation Grants	199,890	39.1%
Other Revenue	14,658	2.9%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 510,778</b>	<b>100 %</b>
EXPENSES	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Program	\$ 300,104	73.2%
General Support	54,738	13.4%
Fundraising	54,879	13.4%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 409,703</b>	<b>100 %</b>

A copy of Breast Cancer Action's 1999 audited financial statement is available on request.

# Access to Care

In a society that focuses much of its attention on scientific and technological advances against disease, we often lose track of the difficulties many people face in gaining access to even basic services. Addressing these problems is an important aspect of BCA's commitment to universal access to comprehensive care:

- Developed a campaign urging private support for a low-cost mobile screening program when, due to lack of funding, San Francisco's mammogram van was taken out of service
- Worked with the California Breast and Gynecological Cancer Treatment Task Force to advance legislation to ensure that women who are diagnosed with breast cancer through state screening programs promptly receive quality treatment at state expense

## The Corporate Stake in the Epidemic



BCA worked to counter the barrage of misinformation and corporate propaganda surrounding breast cancer issues:

- Placed a full-page advertisement in the western edition of the *New York Times*, criticizing the direct-to-consumer advertising of tamoxifen for healthy women and AstraZeneca, the major corporate sponsor of "Breast Cancer Awareness Month"
- Initiated and participated in a collaborative effort of national and regional women's health organizations dedicated to countering corporate hype on women's health issues
- Led the 1999 Cancer Industry Tour in San Francisco in partnership with other cancer and environmental health organizations, urging people to make the link between corporate profit and the cancer epidemic

Through a range of programs and activities in 1999, Breast Cancer Action continued to carry the voices of people affected by breast cancer to inspire and compel the changes necessary to end the breast cancer epidemic. By sharing information with individuals in our community and around the world, we turn our knowledge into power—and transform our visions into reality.

# BCA Supporters

Breast Cancer Action's work is inspired by the millions of people whose lives have been forever changed by breast cancer, and made possible by the astounding generosity of individuals and institutions who believe, as we do, that by turning knowledge into power we can create the fundamental changes in society that are necessary to end the breast cancer epidemic. In addition to the supporters listed below, BCA gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of donors at all levels, who together provide more than half of the organization's annual budget.

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