PHILADELPHIA, PA (September 17, 2012) — Utilizing funds from the Longwood Foundation, the Philadelphia Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® – which serves all of Delaware – has implemented a first-ever initiative to increase breast cancer education and screening, and decrease the percentage of late-stage diagnoses, among Latina women in Sussex County. The Komen Philadelphia Affiliate Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project unites the resources and best practices for serving the Latino community of The Affiliate, health systems and community partners from throughout the county to create a network capable of reaching more widely and deeply into the growing Latina population in Sussex County.

The Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project was developed to help make a positive impact in the local fight against the disease, acting upon a recent needs assessment of Latina women in the county, and the overall breast cancer risks among Latinas. Critical statistics include:

- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Hispanic/Latina women
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic/Latina women
- 48.7% of the diagnoses among Latinas in Sussex County are regional and late-stage breast cancers

The Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project network has set an aggressive goal to reduce the number of late-stage breast cancer diagnoses by increasing screening among Latinas in Sussex County by 25%.

“Until we have the science to prevent breast cancer, our best defense is earliest detection and immediate treatment of every diagnosis,” said Elaine I. Grobman, Chief Executive Officer of the Komen Philadelphia Affiliate. “The extensive experience, resources and dedication of everyone united in the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project will allow us to do just that through education and support for providers as well as the public... and connecting women in need with the services that will save their lives.”

The networking dynamic of the Project is key to its success in teaching the importance of early detection, and particularly addresses the critical need to reach non-documentated Latinas in the county.

“Each of the partnering groups have done a good job as individual entities helping to address the breast health needs of Latinas in Sussex County... and undoubtedly lives have been saved,” said Kate McKenzie, Delaware Field Representative for the Komen Philadelphia Affiliate and Director of the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project. “But defeating the disease that takes 1,252 lives every day requires a united front, a force that pulls together all our knowledge and abilities and shares them. Through this Project, we are gathering all the pockets of knowledge and outreach resources from throughout the county whose potential has been underutilized, and
creating one power-source from which the entire outreach network can draw as we forge ahead in our quest to save lives.”

In addition to The Affiliate, the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project network is comprised of a variety of groups from the healthcare community, the first being grantees of the Komen Philadelphia Affiliate Grant Program. This group includes all three hospitals in the county – Bayhealth Medical Center, Beebe Medical Center-Tunnell Cancer Center and Nanticoke Hospital – as well as the Biden Breast Health Initiative, Cancer Support Community Delaware, and La Esperanza. Other key players in the network include La Red, Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition, and Sussex Strong Communities, as well as a number of other organizations, physicians and practices serving the county.

The model for the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project was inspired by a combination of the Komen Philadelphia Affiliate’s groundbreaking initiative to increase screening among Latinas in Camden County, NJ, The Affiliate’s Latinas United for the Cure program, and Cancer Support Community’s successful networking model. Learn, Share, Thrive, for outreach and education.

"On our own, we’ve been able to experience how working in unison on just a basic level can drive change in cancer awareness and survival,” said Jo Allegro-Smith, Director, Cancer Support Community. “Now with the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project in action, we are on course to unify even more resources and bring about even greater change. Together we have the opportunity to make a tremendous impact by not just saving lives, but by establishing the foundations of healthier lifestyles for generations to come.”

One of the biggest challenges for the Project is the large percentage of Latinas in Sussex County who don’t have a ‘medical home’.

“These women may be non-documented, under- or un-insured, they may not have a primary care physician, a GP, no healthcare provider… so our job is not as easy as educating them about the need to get regular screening,” said McKenzie. “First we have to reach them and gain their trust, then get them assistance… then connect them with the services they need. This project, in essence, is pursuing every possible channel to identify these women, then employing a full range of culturally appropriate methods to educate and guide them to take control of their breast health.”

Rehoboth Beach resident, Mimi Campbell will be a driver of much of the Project’s success, acting as a bi-lingual catalyst between organizations and providers for referrals and coordination of services. Campbell, whose services as Coordinator for the Project are being provided by the Cancer Support Community, has an extensive background in activism for the advancement of Latino/Hispanic communities in North, South and Central America.

“This is a tremendous opportunity and honor for me… helping Latinas in Sussex County to step out of the darkness of breast cancer and realize the tremendous hope and help that exists for them truly helps fulfill my life’s mission,” said Campbell. “The first step is making the women aware of what they need to do to take care of themselves so they can take care of their families. If they need assistance, we will find a way to help them.”

To that end, there is a variety of systems in place to help assure Latina women receive mammograms and, if necessary, further diagnostic testing and treatment if she is underinsured or uninsured. Screening for Life and Delaware Cancer Treatment Program – both state funded programs – are available for eligible women. If neither of these, nor Medicare/Medicaid, apply, the hospitals in Sussex County will be able to provide mammograms for eligible women through their Komen Philadelphia Affiliate grants. In addition, if there is an abnormal screening, the hospital can provide the woman with a Care Coordinator and Nurse Navigator to help her receive further financial assistance and follow a course of treatment.
While they expect their methods to evolve as they journey deeper into the community, the Project organizers have started out with a number of strategic tactics to achieve their goals, primarily:

- Outreach through faith communities and other Latina organizations
- Presence at health fairs and other Latino events in Sussex County
- One-on-one outreach
- Communications through hospitals, physician offices and clinics
- Work with the Delaware Office of Minority Health to encourage continuing education for healthcare providers on minority health competency

“Minority health competency for physicians is a huge factor,” said McKenzie. “For us to be successful we need doctors and nurses at the patient’s ‘entry level’ to be able to address specific needs of the Latina population in their daily care. By understanding their fears and beliefs about breast cancer, as well as the barriers that have kept these women from surviving this disease, these practitioners can establish trust and help assure their patients keep up healthy practices.”

More information on the Sussex County Latina Breast Cancer Project is available at KomenPhiladelphia.org/Sussex.

**About Susan G. Komen for the Cure**

The Komen Philadelphia Affiliate is part of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the world’s largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Serving 15 counties including Philadelphia and surrounding counties in Pennsylvania, all three counties of Delaware and Camden County, New Jersey, in the past 22 years, since the first Komen Philadelphia Race for the Cure, the Komen Philadelphia Affiliate has distributed over $49 million in grants to local organizations, funded approximately 120,000 mammograms for women in need in its service area, and contributed approximately $19 million to breast cancer research. For the past eleven years, The Affiliate has blazed the trail of breast health empowerment for Latina women in its service area through its Latinas United for the Cure program, which has become a model program for more than 100 Komen Affiliates nationwide. More information at KomenPhiladelphia.org.

**Cancer Support Community Delaware**

The Cancer Support Community, formerly The Wellness Community- Delaware, is part of a national nonprofit organization that provides support, education and hope to people with cancer and their loved ones. Through participation in professionally led support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes, people affected by cancer learn vital skills that enable them to regain control, reduce isolation and restore hope regardless of the stage of disease. More information at CancerSupportDelaware.org.

**Mimi Campbell, Coordinator, Sussex County Latina Breast Project**

A resident of Rehoboth Beach, DE, Mimi Campbell is no stranger to the needs of Latina women. The newly named, bi-lingual, coordinator is a Director at First State Spanish division of BilCom Group, teaching the language to groups and individuals from multiple generations. Her past experiences include work with Gavin International, Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans, Hispanic Business Magazine and Hispanic Yellow Pages. Having resided and worked in many South and Central American countries, Campbell possesses a diverse knowledge of multiple cultures and is fluent in Spanish.

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