

# strong VOICES

FALL 2011  
VOLUME 17



## Kicking the Can (and the BPA)

How can you reduce the level of BPA in your body by 60 percent in just three days? Stop eating canned and packaged foods, according to a groundbreaking study co-authored by the Breast Cancer Fund and Silent Spring Institute and published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* this spring.

BPA, or bisphenol A, is an estrogenic chemical linked to breast cancer. Unfortunately, it's also used in countless consumer products, from CDs to dental sealants, receipts to water bottles. Yet according to our study of five San Francisco Bay Area families, much of the BPA that gets in our bodies comes from our food.

While many people are familiar by now with the “BPA-free” labels on hard plastic water bottles and baby bottles—products that were re-engineered without BPA because consumers demanded it—you might not know that BPA is used to line most food cans. (To understand why, see *Science Matters* on page 5.)

To test our hypothesis that food choices could significantly impact BPA exposure, we recruited five families of four to participate in a study eliminating from their diet nearly all food that had contact with packaging, including canned goods and food wrapped or stored in plastic. We provided them with fresh-food meals for three days, all stored in glass containers.

# the Rizzo report



photo: Irene Young

by Jeanne Rizzo, R.N.  
President and CEO

As I celebrate 10 years of leading the Breast Cancer Fund, I've been thinking a lot about science and action—the bedrocks of this organization. Ten years ago, we were part of a small but brave movement of scientists and advocates working to prevent breast cancer by identifying and eliminating its environmental causes. While the mainstream science and cancer communities were all but silent on environmental health, we knew we could no longer wait for research to catch up with the tens of thousands of chemicals in commerce, for industry to stop defending its use of untested chemicals, and for government to act to protect our health. We had to act.

A lot has happened in 10 years. Amidst the continuing breast cancer crisis, scientists produced a compelling body of evidence linking breast cancer to chemical and radiation exposures. The Breast Cancer Fund has transformed this science into public education and advocacy campaigns that protect our health and reduce breast cancer risk.

Turning science into action—that is the model for all we do at the Breast Cancer Fund. And our diligent work has paid off.

Working with allies across the world, the Breast Cancer Fund has made breast cancer prevention a part of the mainstream conversation. Prestigious scientific bodies including the President's Cancer Panel, the New England Journal of Medicine, the World Health Organization, the Endocrine Society, the American Medical Association and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences have recently voiced strong concern about environmental links to cancer and other serious diseases. Our work is further validated by the growing environmental health movement, now millions strong.

At the Breast Cancer Fund, we have never waited to act to prevent breast cancer. We act on behalf of every woman and man with the disease; every family who has lost someone; every person who will be diagnosed this year.

Thank you for supporting us. We couldn't do it without you. Every action you take, every dollar you donate, contributes to turning science into action.

*The Breast Cancer Fund has transformed this science into public education and advocacy campaigns that protect our health and reduce breast cancer risk.*

Yours very truly,

P.S. Help us turn science into action. Make a donation today at [www.breastcancerfund.org/donate](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/donate) or use the enclosed envelope.

# prevention in action



Nancy Buermeyer of the Breast Cancer Fund (front row, left) delivered more than 70,000 petition signatures to the White House in May.

## 70,000 Signatures Delivered to the White House in Support of Cancer Prevention

In May, Breast Cancer Fund Senior Policy Strategist Nancy Buermeyer joined colleagues from the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition in delivering more than 70,000 petition signatures to the White House in support of cancer prevention through better regulation of toxic chemicals.

Nancy's message to President Obama on behalf of the Breast Cancer Fund: Our health depends on making cancer prevention a national priority. She met with representatives from the Council on Environmental Quality, the White House's Office of Public Engagement and the White House Council on Women and Girls. They are committed to working on this issue with us and will look for opportunities to do so.

The coordinated petition drive stemmed from the 2010 President's Cancer Panel Report, which pointed to toxic chemicals in our environment as an underestimated cause of cancer in the United States.

## The Safe Cosmetics Act of 2011

Formaldehyde in hair straighteners, heavy metals in makeup, phthalates in perfume and parabens in lotion. Chemicals linked to cancer don't belong in our everyday cosmetics, yet current law allows them.

That's why the Breast Cancer Fund has been rallying for major change in the cosmetics industry for six years, on behalf of people affected by breast cancer and as a founding partner in the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics.

Now we—and you—have a voice and a vehicle in Congress for truly safe, nontoxic cosmetics. On June 24, Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Edward Markey (D-Mass.) introduced the Safe Cosmetics Act of 2011 in the U.S. House of Representatives.

This bill (H.R.2359) would give the FDA the authority it needs to ensure that personal care products are free of chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects, infertility and other serious health problems. It's a significant update of the 2010 bill,

with provisions to support the efforts of small businesses to make safe products and force ingredient suppliers to disclose the chemical makeup of components like "fragrance."

We've launched a co-sponsor drive to give this bill plenty of support in Congress. Learn more and send a letter of support to your U.S. Representative at [www.breastcancerfund.org/cosmetics](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/cosmetics).

## California AG Lays Down the Law with Brazilian Blowout

California's Attorney General has taken action against the maker of Brazilian Blowout hair-straightening products under the California Safe Cosmetics Program, which was created by a Breast Cancer Fund–sponsored law passed in 2005.

Brazilian Blowout and similar keratin-based hair-straightening products are egregious examples of the lack of oversight in the cosmetics industry. Testing by Oregon OSHA and Health Canada found as much as 8 to 12 percent formaldehyde—a known human carcinogen—in Brazilian Blowout products, including some labeled "formaldehyde free." Yet the U.S. Food and Drug Administration lacks the ability to issue a mandatory recall of these products, and has not acted on requests to issue a voluntary recall.

In the absence of federal action, California has filed suit against Brazilian Blowout for failing to report toxic ingredients to the state under the Safe Cosmetics Program.





# 2011 Climb Against the Odds



*Top left: Rope teams inch their way up the West Face of Mt. Shasta. Top right: Climbers Erin Warren, Ann Maechtlen, Linda Morton and Leta Sharpe fly prayer flags, each inscribed with the name of someone who has faced cancer, on the summit. Bottom: The 2011 Climb Against the Odds team and guides celebrate their journey on the way to the trailhead. Photo credit: Sequoia Pettengell.*

**On June 21, hours before sunrise, 34 intrepid climbers departed base camp on Northern California's Mt. Shasta to begin their ascent to the 14,179-foot summit.** Led by the light of the moon and stars, they left in small rope teams and headed across the first snow field on the approach to the West Face. As the sun rose, a blanket of fog covered the peak of the mountain and winds blew at 20 miles an hour. But the fog burned off by the time the teams arrived at the aptly named Misery Hill, from which they could see the summit looming above them. Ultimately, 22 of the 34 climbers made it to the summit; all returned to base camp by late afternoon, tired but in good spirits.

This was the Breast Cancer Fund's twelfth Climb Against the Odds and eighth climb of Mt. Shasta. (Past expeditions have climbed Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina; Mt. McKinley, Alaska; Mt. Fuji, Japan; and Mt. Rainier, Wash.) The team was made up of 34 breast cancer survivors and individuals touched by the disease, hailing from 14 states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Washington—and the District of Columbia. Participants trained in regional teams starting in January and came together at Mt. Shasta, the second-highest peak in the Cascade Range, June 19 to 25.



The Breast Cancer Fund is grateful to our 2011 team members, each of whom had very personal reasons to climb—often to honor their own or loved ones' experience with cancer—and all of whom shared a commitment to breast cancer prevention. The event raised an impressive \$568,000 to support the Breast Cancer Fund's work to identify and eliminate the environmental causes of the disease. Go team!

Interested in climbing with us in 2012? Visit [www.breastcancerfund.org/climb](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/climb).

# SACRED TREK 2011:

## Mt. Everest Base Camp

Imagine the stunning views that greeted the Breast Cancer Fund's 2011 Sacred Trek team members when they reached the Kala Pattar peak near Mt. Everest Base Camp, standing at a whopping 18,192 feet. As breathtaking and humbling an experience as it was, it was but one of many highlights of their 19-day journey.

Trekkers embarked on this life-changing adventure for many reasons, and all the team members returned home inspired by their shared experiences on the trail and committed to continuing to support breast cancer prevention. Together, the 15 trekkers raised more than \$124,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund.

Their guide was Cathy Ann Taylor, master trekker, owner of Cattara—Adventures with Insight, and 2006 Breast Cancer Fund Hero. Cathy Ann has also led Breast Cancer Fund Sacred Treks to Bhutan, Mont Blanc and Machu Picchu, raising more than \$350,000. Her next Sacred Trek, Ladakh—A Journey to Little Tibet, will take place from July 17 to August 2, 2012. Learn more and apply at [www.breastcancerfund.org/2012sacredtreks](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/2012sacredtreks).



*Above: The Sacred Treks: Everest team in front of Tawoche peak.  
Below: Flags fly in the wind at Everest Base Camp during a prayer flag ceremony. Photo credit: Cathy Ann Taylor.*

# science matters

## Why BPA Is in Cans, and How It Ends Up in Us

As you've read in our cover story, the Breast Cancer Fund is concerned about the chemical bisphenol A, or BPA, leaching from cans into food and then getting into our bodies. But why is BPA used in food cans, and how does it end up in our food?

Food cans are lined with an epoxy resin that contains BPA. This lining forms a barrier between the metal and the food, which helps create a tight seal so that the food is safe from bacterial contamination.

But while BPA-based epoxy resins solve one food-safety problem, they unfortunately create another, as BPA can leach from the resin and make its way into food. This is problematic because BPA is an

estrogenic chemical, and laboratory studies show that it is linked to breast cancer and an array of other health concerns.

Why does BPA leach from the epoxy-resin can liner? The most common epoxy resin used in food cans is formed by binding two chemicals, BPA and epichlorohydrin. When these two molecules bind, the resulting copolymer can be incomplete and unstable, allowing BPA to migrate from the liner into food. BPA (and its chemical derivative bisphenol A diglycidyl ether) tends to leach more when heated. And because BPA is lipophilic, or fat-seeking, it tends to leach more into fatty foods.

# strong VOICES

THE BREAST CANCER FUND'S STRONG VOICES PROGRAM IS A NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO SHARE THEIR STORIES WHILE INSPIRING THE PUBLIC TO TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT BREAST CANCER.



*Kathi Salley Randall accepts the Andrea Ravinett Martin Strong Voice Award at the 2011 Heroes Celebration. Photo credit: Bennett Sell-Kline.*

**Kathi Salley Randall, RNC**, a neonatal nurse practitioner from Moreno Valley, Calif., is passionate about creating an environment where struggling newborns can recover, develop and thrive without the stress of exposures to toxic chemicals.

Caring for sick newborns and seeing many of her fellow nurses face cancer inspired Kathi to found GreenNICU Consulting ([www.greennicu.com](http://www.greennicu.com)) to help educate and empower health care workers to create safe and healthy environments for babies and for themselves.

Since joining the Breast Cancer Fund's 2009 Climb Against the Odds team, Kathi has become a Strong Voice for the organization's work to eliminate the environmental causes of breast cancer. In April 2011 we honored Kathi as a Breast Cancer Fund Hero for her efforts to create a healthy tomorrow for nurses and babies alike. Brava, Kathi!

# thank you

*The Breast Cancer Fund would like to gratefully acknowledge a few of our partners in prevention that are supporting our work in unique ways. These socially responsible businesses not only provide significant financial support to the Breast Cancer Fund, they also stand by our side to spread the word about breast cancer prevention and strive to protect the health of both people and planet.*

## LUNA

Clif Bar & Company, the makers of LUNA, knows that when women come together, they create a positive impact in the world. LUNA, the Clif Bar Family Foundation, Team LUNA Chix and LUNAFEST have collectively raised over \$3.5 million for the Breast Cancer Fund! [www.lunabar.com](http://www.lunabar.com)

## Ahnu's Prevention Mission and Plus 3 Network

From March to May 2011, Ahnu Footwear's Prevention Mission aimed to raise \$100,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund by donating \$5 for every women's performance shoe sold. Mission accomplished! [www.ahnufootwear.com](http://www.ahnufootwear.com)

Now, Ahnu is pledging to donate \$30,000 to the Breast Cancer Fund through the Plus 3 Network. Log your exercise online to support prevention with Ahnu at [www.plus3network.com/cause/19](http://www.plus3network.com/cause/19).

## Donate For Charity

A national company that specializes in vehicle donations for nonprofits, Donate For Charity will arrange to tow vehicles (running or not), handle DMV processing, send a tax-deductible receipt and distribute donations. More than \$750,000 has been raised for the Breast Cancer Fund since 2003. [www.donateforcharity.com](http://www.donateforcharity.com)

## Seventh Generation

Seventh Generation believes that business is a powerful instrument for meaningful change, which is why the company is supporting the Breast Cancer Fund by donating \$40,000 for prevention in 2011. [www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com)

## Special thanks to these businesses that sponsor our events:

LUNA, Clif Bar Family Foundation, Ahnu Footwear, ISIS, Osprey, Wells Fargo, Autodesk, Shasta Mountain Guides, Klean Kanteen, Smartwool, Ibex, Outdoor Research, Leki, Julbo, Sterling Rope, Princeton Tec, Camelbak, Adventure Medical Kits, Sherpa Adventure Gear, Episencial, Innersense, Cattara—Adventures with Insight, Juice Beauty, EO Products.

*Learn more about our business partners and how your company can support the Breast Cancer Fund at [www.breastcancerfund.org/partners](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/partners).*

## LUNAFEST

September 2011–June 2012

San Francisco, New York and a city near you!

On September 22, LUNA's festival of short films by, for and about women will premiere in San Francisco, followed by an October 26 screening at Tribeca Cinemas in New York City, hosted by the Breast Cancer Fund. The festival will then travel to 150 communities, raising funds for the Breast Cancer Fund along the way. Find a LUNAFEST or host your own at

[www.lunafest.org](http://www.lunafest.org).

## Peak Hike for Prevention

October 2, 2011

Mt. Tamalpais, Marin County, California

Take a hike with the Breast Cancer Fund to help stop this disease before it starts! Be inspired by your fellow hikers as you take one step at a time for prevention. Recruit friends to hike as a team, or go solo and make friends on the trail.

[www.breastcancerfund.org/2011peakhike](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/2011peakhike)

## Sacred Treks: Ladakh

July 17–August 2, 2012

Ladakh, India

Join trekking guide Cathy Ann Taylor for an extraordinary hiking and cultural adventure to Ladakh, a remote region of India that is often referred to as "Little Tibet." Experience a journey of a lifetime while helping to raise funds to support the Breast Cancer Fund.

[www.breastcancerfund.org/2012sacredtreks](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/2012sacredtreks)

## The Get Active Challenge

Happening now wherever you are!

Signed up for a run, walk, bike, triathlon or other active event? Create your own personal fundraising page for the Breast Cancer Fund through our Get Active Challenge program!

[www.breastcancerfund.org/getactive](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/getactive)

## Heroes Celebration

Save the date for our annual Heroes Celebration in San Francisco: May 14, 2012.

## Kicking the Can

*continued from page 1*

The striking result: After just three days of avoiding packaged food, participants' urine levels of BPA dropped an average of 60 percent. When the family members returned to their regular diets, their BPA levels bounced right back.

Data in hand, the Breast Cancer Fund has redoubled efforts to get BPA out of food cans and out of our bodies.

In addition to supporting state and federal legislative efforts to regulate the use of BPA in canned foods and children's feeding products, we're asking canned food manufacturers to replace BPA with a safe, tested alternative that isn't linked to breast cancer or other serious diseases.

The Breast Cancer Fund has requested dialogue with the top canned food makers, asking for answers about their plans to eliminate BPA and find safe alternatives. We invited the community

to take part, too, and delivered the response—more than 20,000 messages—to each of the three biggest companies, Campbell Soup, Del Monte Foods and General Mills (maker of Progresso, Cascadian Farm and Muir Glen).

In July we asked people across the United States to kick the can for a month by avoiding canned foods, as much for personal health as to send a message to companies that consumers want a safe alternative to BPA. Yet not all people have the resources or ability to stop using canned foods, which is why the Breast Cancer Fund continues to push for industry-wide change.

In August we launched a new campaign, Cans Not Cancer. Our aim is simple: to move the market to produce safe, BPA-free canned foods for everyone. Please join us at: [www.breastcancerfund.org/cansnotcancer](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/cansnotcancer).

### STAFF

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# get involved

*Turn Awareness into Action this October!*

In October, we're moving beyond awareness: It's Breast Cancer Prevention Month. Time to act! You have the power to take steps to reduce your risk of breast cancer and to protect your friends and family from the disease. Join the Breast Cancer Fund in a month of education and action to stop breast cancer before it starts. Prevention is power in October and beyond.

Learn how to get involved at  
[www.breastcancerfund.org/preventionispower](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/preventionispower)