

# strong VOICES

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## Victory! Federal Law Bans Toxic Phthalates in Toys

After months of advocacy on the part of the Breast Cancer Fund, in August Congress passed historic legislation banning six phthalates in toys. The ban, a provision of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, protects children from these plastic-softening chemicals that have been linked to breast cancer, decreased sperm counts, birth defects and other health problems. (See page 5 to learn about reducing your exposure to phthalates.)

The bill passed in the House and Senate with overwhelming support, garnering President Bush's signature and sending a clear message to the chemical industry that toxic chemicals have no place in toys. The legislation marks a first, important step toward reforming the way chemicals are regulated in the United States.

"Congress got a glimpse into how chemicals are regulated in this country and saw how broken the system is," said Janet Nudelman, the Breast Cancer Fund's director of program and policy. "The phthalate ban is only the tip of the iceberg of what's needed to protect Americans from unsafe chemical exposures."

# the Rizzo report



photo: Irene Young

by Jeanne Rizzo, R.N.,  
President and CEO

In August, the Breast Cancer Fund staff gathered in our conference room, strung a five-letter banner reading "Yay Us!" and embarked on a storytelling journey that took us back to our founder Andrea Ravinett Martin, whose vision guided us to this moment of celebration. Thanks in no small part to the Breast Cancer Fund's advocacy, the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which included a strong provision banning toxic phthalates from children's toys, was about to become federal law.

Ten years ago when Andrea and Nancy Evans published *Pathways to Prevention*, they set the Breast Cancer Fund on a course that steered us directly into the environmental health movement. Seven years ago when we dedicated our mission to breast cancer prevention, we could only imagine the day we would be advancing national legislation that would reduce children's exposure to harmful chemicals linked to early puberty and later-life breast cancer. As our staff gathered to celebrate this monumental achievement, we paused to think about all the women we have lost and all the reasons we do this work. This victory is clear validation of the wisdom of Andrea's vision and our mission. With your support, we have been advancing environmental public health policies in California, exporting model legislation to other states to build momentum, and ultimately advocating at the federal level for sound laws that will protect all of us.

This victory is not just about toxic chemicals in toys. It's about the urgent need for sweeping chemical policy reform. And we are on our way. This ban on toxic toys represents a paradigm shift. It codifies in federal law the principle that proof of safety is required when evidence of harm is mounting.

This story could not be told without mentioning our "shero" Janet Nudelman, Breast Cancer Fund's director of program and policy, whose tireless advocacy on this initiative has been recognized by colleague organizations, legislative staff and the media.

And, most important, this story can't be told without mentioning the unwavering support we receive from our community of donors and friends. Yay you! Yay all of us!

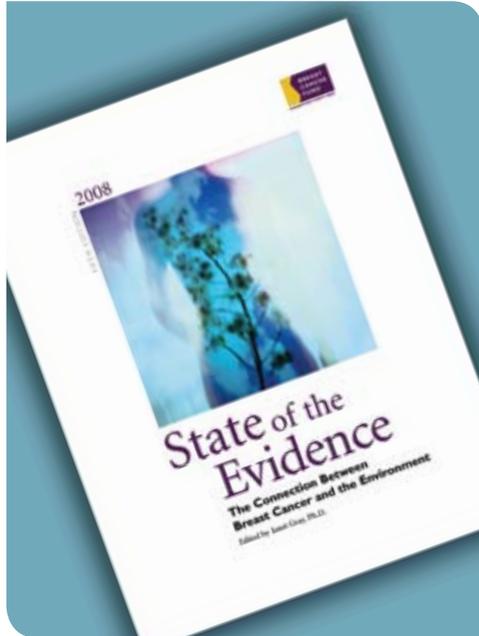
Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "e".

*This victory is not just about toxic chemicals in toys. It's about the urgent need for sweeping chemical policy reform. And we are on our way.*

*P.S. We hope you enjoy the new design of our newsletter. The smaller format allows us to save paper and printing costs. Please let us know what you think!*

# prevention in action



## State of the Evidence 2008 Looks at Early Exposure

The age at which we are exposed to chemicals and radiation may be just as important in breast cancer causation as the dose of exposure, according to the Breast Cancer Fund's 2008 edition of *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment*. In particular, early-life exposures to hormone disrupting chemicals—during gestation and childhood, but also continuing through first childbirth and breastfeeding—are critical to later-life breast cancer risk. These compounds have yet to be classified as chemicals that increase breast cancer risk, even though recent studies implicate many of them in the current high rates of the disease. *State of the Evidence* not only takes a comprehensive look at environmental risks for breast cancer but also studies themes in the research and solutions for moving forward and preventing the disease in future generations. Visit [www.breastcancerfund.org/evidence](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/evidence) to explore the report online or to order a printed copy.

## Cleaning Up Our Food Containers

The Breast Cancer Fund is supporting HR 6228, a bill introduced in June by U.S. Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) that would ban bisphenol A, or BPA, from food and beverage containers. BPA was initially marketed as a synthetic estrogen and is now used in hard, polycarbonate plastic (often labeled #7) and in the plastic epoxy resins used to line metal food and infant formula cans, among other products. Emerging research indicates that BPA leaches from plastic, increasing estrogen exposure, which is linked to early puberty and increased risk for breast cancer. Wal-Mart and Toys Я Us have already agreed to stop selling baby bottles containing BPA, and sports-bottle maker Nalgene will also remove the chemical from its products. But the Food and Drug Administration continues to say that BPA is safe, citing just two industry-funded reports and ignoring more than 100 university and government scientific studies substantiating the chemical's dangers.



## Good Chemistry in California

After months of working with lawmakers and a coalition of health advocates, the Breast Cancer Fund is celebrating the California legislature's passage of two important bills designed to keep toxic chemicals out of consumer products. AB 1879, authored by Assemblymember Mike Feuer, gives the state authority to monitor the use of chemicals in everyday products, and Senator Joe Simitian's SB 509 creates a public online database of information on these chemicals. The legislation marks a historic moment, as lawmakers admit that the current system of monitoring hazardous chemicals in everyday products (like cosmetics, food containers and children's toys) needs to be overhauled. The new laws are a great first step, but the work isn't over: Implementation will require much public input, and the Breast Cancer Fund plans to have a strong voice on the matter in the months to come.

# Climb Against the Odds 2008



*Rope team of guide John Prud'homme, Diane Toby of Woodside, Calif., Molly Baker of Oakland, Calif., and Jenny Berrien of San Francisco ascending the west face of Mt. Shasta. Photo: Cathy Ann Taylor*

In March 2007, family physician Rosanne Iversen of Steamboat Springs, Colo., was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 45. On completing her treatment last November, Iversen signed up for the Breast Cancer Fund's **Climb Against the Odds 2008** as a way to celebrate life and move beyond cancer.



Iversen joined her 32 teammates in an intensive six-month journey of raising funds and preparing physically and mentally for the expedition to climb 14,162-foot Mt. Shasta in Northern California. This would be the Breast Cancer Fund's ninth team of breast cancer survivors and supporters to scale a mountain to overcome the devastating experience of the disease and participate in a collective effort to prevent breast cancer.

The 2008 team ranged in age from 15 to 65 and hailed from California, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Washington state, Washington, D.C., Canada and Japan.

*Rosanne Iversen of Steamboat Springs, Colo., Kishan Shah of Santa Monica, Calif., Hitomi Fukahori of Yokohama, Japan, and Michelle Zousmer of San Diego, at the summit of Mt. Shasta. Photo: Sequoia Pettengell*

In June, after months of training with their regional teams, the climbers gathered in Northern California to complete the final leg of their Climb Against the Odds journey.

Embraced by the Mt. Shasta community, Breast Cancer Fund staff and their loved ones, the climbers and guides began the first leg of their expedition—from the trailhead at 6,860 feet to base camp at 9,400 feet.

From base camp, with a full moon to light the way, rope teams of climbers started their summit attempts between 1:30 and 3 a.m. By 10 a.m., all teams had made it to the crest of the west face at 13,334 feet, and at 10:15 a.m., Mark, Nancy and Brandon Wilhelm of Evergreen, Colo. were the first to summit, followed shortly by their teammates.

With perfect climbing conditions and great leadership and perseverance, 31 of the 33 climbers successfully reached the summit—a new record for Climb Against the Odds!

For Iversen, the climb was icing on the cake. “For six months, I have focused on the positive, pushing myself in training and fundraising. I have now symbolically put breast cancer behind me and can move forward physically and mentally. It truly is all about the journey.”



*The Climb Against the Odds 2008 team and Shasta Mountain guides at Horse Camp on their return to the trailhead. Photo: Sequoia Pettengell*

In the words of Breast Cancer Fund founder Andrea Ravinett Martin: “We apply our courage and faith that anything is possible, if taken one step at a time. And we do it all as part of a team, knowing that there is more that we can achieve together than apart.”

Visit [www.breastcancerfund.org/climb](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/climb) to read about all of our courageous climbers and learn about Climb Against the Odds 2009!

# science matters

## Avoiding Phthalates in Everyday Life

Phthalates are a class of chemicals that disrupt hormones and have been linked to birth defects, early puberty (a risk factor for breast cancer) and low sperm counts. Some studies have shown that phthalate exposure is especially dangerous during certain windows of fetal development, so pregnant women should take special care to avoid exposure.

These toxic chemicals show up in imitation leather, shower curtains and other products containing polyvinyl chloride plastic. They're also found in some cosmetics like hairspray and nail polish, and are a frequent component of the ingredient “fragrance” in many consumer goods. As of February of 2009, phthalates will no longer be allowed in toys. (See page 1.)

To reduce your and your family's exposure to these chemicals, look for plastic products marked “phthalate-free” or “PVC-free.” Some products also carry the CE mark, which indicates that a product is compliant with European Union regulations and therefore phthalate-free. Check plastics for recycling codes: PVC plastics are marked #3 and should be avoided. Better choices are codes #1, #2, #4 or #5. (Plastics marked #6 and #7 contain other chemicals of concern, like BPA or styrene.) When shopping for household cleaners and cosmetics, choose products without the word “fragrance” on the label. Finally, when purchasing new items, make sure retailers know phthalate-free merchandise is important to you.

# strong VOICES

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.



The Wilhelm family of Evergreen, Colo., at the 14,162-foot summit of Mt. Shasta.

For the Wilhelm family of Evergreen, Colo., the Climb Against the Odds journey was about more than reaching the top of Mt. Shasta.

Mark and Nancy Wilhelm and their 15-year-old son Brandon chose to climb to honor Mark's mother, who passed away from breast cancer. The disease had a profound impact on Mark, who was an only child, and Nancy and Brandon shared Mark's motivation to ensure that fewer families must face this devastating disease.

As they trained and raised funds for the climb, they also shared their story through a series of newspaper and television interviews. Nancy spoke out on behalf of children's health and breast cancer prevention at a Denver media event supporting the Breast Cancer Fund's national campaign to ban phthalates from toys. During a school trip to the State Capitol, the youngest Wilhelm, 9-year-old Justin, called on Colorado Governor Bill Ritter to support state legislation banning toxic toys.

The Breast Cancer Fund salutes the Wilhelms for being Strong Voices for breast cancer prevention.

## giving A Party With a Purpose

On June 28, Patty and Craig Rotile hosted a party at their home in New Jersey, and rather than asking for gifts or food, the couple requested that friends dedicate their contributions to the Breast Cancer Fund. In return, party guests received a copy of *State of the Evidence 2008*.

"I have several family members and friends who have had breast cancer," said Patty Rotile.

"We contribute to the Breast Cancer Fund because of the focus on prevention, which we believe deserves money and attention."

With 48 contributions from partygoers, the event raised \$4,615 for breast cancer prevention.

# thankyou

*The Breast Cancer Fund thanks all of our supporters for your generous contributions that have moved us closer to our vision of eliminating breast cancer. We want to give special thanks to supporters who have donated endless hours toward advancing our successes over the last year.*

**Thank you to the following scientific experts who edited, reviewed and commented on the 2008 *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment*:**

- Janet Gray, Ph.D.
- Kristin Aronson, Ph.D.
- Devra Lee Davis, Ph.D., M.P.H.
- Suzanne Fenton, Ph.D.
- Annie J. Sasco, M.D., Dr.P.H.
- Ana Soto, M.D.

**Thank you to the following generous supporters who have hosted annual fundraisers and other programs to benefit the Breast Cancer Fund:**

- Donate for Charity
- LUNAFEST, a national traveling festival of short films by, for and about women, sponsored by Clif Bar & Co., makers of LUNA
- Team LUNA Chix, a division of the LUNA Pro mountain bike and triathlon teams sponsored by Clif Bar & Co.
- 107.7 The Bone and Ta Ta Tuesdays
- California Canoe and Kayak's Support Strokes
- Allegro Ballroom's "A Leg Up" for Breast Cancer
- Joanne Wood Memorial March Madness for Mammaries Hike
- Mark Kuhn's Breast Cancer Sports Auctions
- Johnson Outdoors and Ocean Kayak
- Red House Records and Greg Brown Tribute Album

- See Jane Run, through its all-women's triathlon, See Jane Tri
- Speedgoat Bicycles' Pink Bike Raffle
- Universal Share's Strike Out Breast Cancer! Bowling event
- Aromas for Living Day of Renewal
- eBay Auction for Breast Cancer Awareness
- New Leaf Paper's TREEty
- Beyond the Pink—Hike to Prevent Breast Cancer
- Care2.com/Race Against Breast Cancer
- Lorri Painter Peacock Open
- Polo Ralph Lauren's Pink Pony Shopping Night
- Destination Races and the Santa Barbara Wine Country Half Marathon

**We also acknowledge the hundreds of supporters who donate through online giving resources and their workplace giving programs. In addition, we thank several volunteers who have given many hours of their valuable time to support the Breast Cancer Fund:**

- Luz Agana
- Anne Blackman
- Alice George
- Michael Hagerman
- Penny Noble
- Marcy Ramirez
- Ruel Simbol

*If you would like to learn more about hosting an event to benefit the Breast Cancer Fund, please contact Julie Homan at (866) 760-8223 x15, or [jhoman@breastcancerfund.org](mailto:jhoman@breastcancerfund.org)*

# coming up

2008

## LUNAFEST

The 8th annual traveling festival of short films—by, for and about women—benefiting the Breast Cancer Fund begins its tour of more than 150 venues nationwide in October and runs through April 2009. Find a showing in your area or host your own! [www.lunafest.org](http://www.lunafest.org)

## Give in 2008

Don't wait until December 31 to consider donating to the Breast Cancer Fund. Make your contribution early in preparation for tax season. Consider a prayer flag as a great holiday gift to honor loved ones. Looking to replace your car? Consider donating it in support of breast cancer prevention. [www.breastcancerfund.org/donate](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/donate)

2009

## Heroes Tribute

April 2, 2009

Mark your calendars for Heroes Tribute 2009 at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. Join the Breast Cancer Fund in celebrating another year of incredible successes and the individuals who have made them possible through their work to advance breast cancer prevention.

## Climb Against the Odds

June 21–27, 2009

Join a team of inspiring women and men in a mountain expedition for prevention and have an experience of a lifetime. Applications for Climb Against the Odds—Mt. Shasta 2009 are now available online. Space is limited, so reserve your spot on the team today. [www.breastcancerfund.org/climb](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/climb)

## Sacred Treks: Tour du Mont Blanc

July 26–August 2, 2009

Expert Himalayan guide Cathy Ann Taylor has organized another incredible mountain trek to benefit the Breast Cancer Fund. Register now for a 6-day, 7-night Cattara adventure hiking around Western Europe's Mont Blanc. [www.cattara.com](http://www.cattara.com)

## Victory! Federal Law Bans Toxic Phthalates in Toys

*continued from page 1*

The Breast Cancer Fund led a coalition of more than 60 groups from around the country, including the National Council of Churches, the American Nurses Association and MomsRising.org. This broad-based coalition organized press events, activated its constituencies and helped make this victory possible, despite aggressive lobbying by the chemical industry.

"This was a David and Goliath victory," said Nudelman. "Public health advocates and parents were up against big oil and the chemical industry, and we won."

A growing movement of parents, scientists and advocates has voiced ongoing concern about unsafe chemicals in consumer products. Months before Congress took action, retailers and manufacturers including Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, Lego, Evenflo and Gerber responded to consumer outcry by announcing plans to phase out phthalates in toys. Several states, including

California, Washington and Vermont, also restricted phthalate use in children's products in the past year.

"A year ago, most people had never even heard of phthalates. But in the last few months, our members sent nearly 100,000 letters to legislators to let them know they wanted phthalates out of toys," said Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, executive director of MomsRising.org. "Parents have been at the forefront of efforts to call for safer, nontoxic products, and it doesn't end with phthalates."

The phthalate ban sets an important precedent that could and should influence the way federal agencies study chemical exposures in the future. The Breast Cancer Fund is ready to use the momentum from the ban to propel our future advocacy, but we couldn't have done it alone. Thanks to our amazing community of supporters, we move closer every day to eliminating the environmental causes of breast cancer.

## breast cancer fund

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# get involved

**Coming to a Theater Near You!** Join the 8th Annual LUNAFEST  
In September, LUNA, the whole nutrition bar for women,  
launched the 8th annual LUNAFEST, a traveling festival of short  
films by, for and about women. The San Francisco premiere  
commenced a tour of 150 venues nationwide, scheduled to run  
through April 2009. Each LUNAFEST has its own flavor—from  
gala affairs to grassroots efforts—and provides an opportunity  
to build support, awareness and community. Every ticket sold  
benefits the Breast Cancer Fund and local nonprofit organiza-  
tions. Visit [www.lunafest.org](http://www.lunafest.org) to attend a showing in your area or  
to host your own LUNAFEST!