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DIAHANN CARROLL LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN HONORING CANCER CAREGIVERS

New Survey Overwhelmingly Finds Cancer Patients Able to Focus on Treatment Thanks to Caregivers, Despite Caregiver Exposure to Stress

New York, New York – Legendary actress and performer Diahann Carroll turned the spotlight today on the “Stars” in the lives of cancer patients and survivors by announcing the launch of The Wellness Community’s® (TWC) *Star Campaign*, a national effort to honor the everyday people who support cancer patients in numerous ways throughout their cancer journeys. In addition, TWC released the findings of a national survey of cancer survivors and their caregivers.

The *Star Campaign* is a web-based effort, www.starcampaign.org, which enables cancer patients to honor and reflect on the caregivers who support them. Carroll, a breast cancer survivor and national spokesperson for the campaign, said she was supported by Marilyn Mazarulli, a close personal friend.

TWC – an international, non-profit organization dedicated to providing free cancer support, education, and hope for all people living with cancer – surveyed cancer survivors and their caregivers across the country and found that:

- More than eight in 10, or about 85 percent, of cancer patients, survivors and caregivers agree that the support of caregivers allows the focus to remain on cancer treatment
- Seventy-two percent of caregivers, cancer patients and survivors believe that caregivers are critical to treatment decision-making; this is in spite of caregivers’ reporting regular exposure to stress and anxiety – a high 80 percent – while supporting their loved ones
- Caregivers are just as likely to receive treatment for depression and anxiety as cancer patients and survivors

“Having personally battled breast cancer, I have directly experienced how vital it is to have the support of a caregiver, like Marilyn, while undergoing treatment,” Carroll said. “Caregivers take on so many roles – from emotional support, which I believe to be the most critical, to providing transportation and helping with meals and chores at home. But it can come at a high price for the caregiver. While we as patients and survivors might not always see it, caregivers experience a great deal of stress as they help us cope and keep our focus on getting well. We can’t thank them enough.”

As part of this effort, Carroll also announced the launch of a new public service announcement (PSA) aimed at raising awareness of The *Star Campaign* and caregiving. The PSA will be distributed nationally and features Carroll encouraging cancer patients and survivors to honor their *Stars*.

On The *Star Campaign*’s website, cancer patients and survivors can honor their *Stars* by completing a simple form about themselves and the person they are choosing to honor. Stars and patients will be listed on the “*Star Walk of Fame*,” which displays photos of Stars and serves as a place to share personal stories about the importance of caregiving. People may also purchase a *Star Campaign* lapel pin for \$5 in support of caregivers and the campaign or make a tax deductible donation.

“I hope everyone will wear their *Star Campaign* pin with pride,” Carroll said. “It is a great way to show your support whether you are a patient, survivor or caregiver.”

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“We are pleased to conduct this campaign to honor the caregivers’ selfless acts of kindness during a patient’s cancer journey,” said Kim Thiboldeaux, President and CEO of TWC. “We want everyone to know that patients value the role of caregivers – whether the person is a spouse, other family member, nurse or a friend. It’s a difficult job, as our survey found, that takes a great deal of strength and courage.”

To honor a Star in your life, share stories of cancer caregiving experiences, review the results of our survey conducted from May 3-21, 2007, or contribute to *The Star Campaign*, please visit www.starcampaign.org. The campaign is made possible by a charitable donation from GlaxoSmithKline Oncology.

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About The Wellness Community®

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in June 2007, The Wellness Community is an international non-profit organization dedicated to providing free support, education and hope to people with cancer and their loved ones. Through participation in professionally-led support groups, educational workshops, nutrition and exercise programs, 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 their disease. Today, there are 24 Wellness Communities around the United States plus 56 satellite and off-site programs, two centers abroad in Tel Aviv and Tokyo, three centers in development, and online at The Virtual Wellness Community. For more information, visit www.thewellnesscommunity.org.

Editors' Note: Photos will be available following the luncheon via the Associated Press Photo Network and on the Internet at Feature Photo Service's link through <http://www.newscom.com>