

PRESSRELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Gift of Life" Names Bishop Curtis Guillory Honorary Chair of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

(Beaumont, Texas) – August 21, 2006 – For the consecutive second year, **The Most Reverend Curtis J. Guillory, SVD, DD, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont**, will serve as honorary chair of the "Gift of Life" Program's Prostate Cancer Awareness Month activities, including its annual **Prostate Cancer Screening Events** scheduled on three consecutive Saturdays—**9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on September 9, 16, and 23**—at **Lamar State College-Carl Parker Center, Port Arthur; Lamar State College Student Center, Orange; and Mount Gilead Missionary Baptist Church, Beaumont**, respectively.

A powerful spokesperson for the "Gift of Life" last September, **Bishop Guillory** motivated men to be tested through his televised public service announcements and by attending all screenings. In addition to taking his message of cancer awareness and early detection to Southeast Texans through the broadcast media, this year parishioners of every Catholic church in the diocese will hear the Bishop's encouraging statements through an audio presentation.

"It is a blessing to be associated with the 'Gift of Life,' an organization that is so dedicated to caring for those who are medically underserved," Bishop Guillory said. "I am pleased to be Honorary Chair of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month again this year. Last year, I had an opportunity to visit with literally dozens of men who recognized the importance of taking preventative measures to ensure their health. I especially commend the program's supporters and volunteers, including the physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals who provide their services for this lifesaving endeavor."

Program Chair **Regina Rogers** expressed her gratitude for the Bishop's willingness to help further the "Gift of Life" mission of decreasing mortality rates associated with prostate cancer in this area.

(more)

“We are pleased that Bishop Guillory has graciously agreed to chair our prostate cancer awareness campaign for the second time,” she stated. “A revered religious and community leader, he is a wonderful role model and the ideal advocate for this initiative.”

Despite being cut short by Hurricane Rita, the program served nearly **250** men in September 2005. Clients whose appointments were cancelled by the storm were invited to a special re-screening in February at the Julie & Ben Rogers Cancer Institute, where an additional **47** men were tested.

The program screens men who are at least 45 years of age (40 if African American or if there is a family history of prostate cancer), have limited income and do not have medical insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, or are underinsured. During the upcoming events, approximately 400 Southeast Texas men will receive PSA blood tests from volunteer phlebotomists associated with the **Julie & Ben Rogers Cancer Institute** and digital rectal exams from local physicians. Volunteer physician assistance at the screenings is made available by the “Gift of Life” Prostate Cancer Medical Advisory Board, chaired by **John Henderson, IV, MD**, and other members, **Gerardo Chica, MD; Danny Chow, MD; J. Denton Harris, IV, MD; George Hoffman, MD; Joseph Kong, MD, FACR; J. Coffy Pieternelle, MD; Steven Socher, MD;** and UTMB-Galveston liaison, **Michael Warren, MD**. Additional physicians include **Albert Ong, MD; Ernest Hymel, MD, PhD;** and **Manuel Espinoza, MD**.

Educational gift bags, refreshments, and door prizes will be available for participants. **For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (409) 833-3663.**

Harold Steward (Beaumont), **Jamie Applebach** (Orange), and **Dianne Marks, BSN, RN** (Port Arthur) are chairing the activities that are sponsored by the **Nelda C. and H. J. Lutcher Stark Foundation, Quality Mat Company Inc., H-E-B, Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospitals, Capital One, BASF and TOTAL: Miracle Match for Life, TAP Pharmaceuticals Inc., McDonald’s & Golden Triangle Cycle Center, Beaumont Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Wal-Mart, and Sam’s Club.**

Eligible clients with abnormal test results will have access to follow-up medical care through a referral link with **UTMB-Galveston**. During the past six years, the endeavor has made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of Southeast Texans with the provision of more than **3,600** free prostate cancer screenings and educational outreach that has motivated men to visit their doctors and be tested. Notably, the “Gift of Life” has referred more than **120** men to **UTMB** for follow-up on abnormal test results, with over **20** men having been diagnosed with prostate cancer through our program.

Targeted Outreach Campaign

In addition to offering three free Prostate Cancer Screening Events in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange, the “Gift of Life” initiates a targeted outreach campaign during September each year, advising area men about the need for annual testing and the

availability of “Gift of Life” services. Specifically, the program makes a concerted effort to reach potential clients in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

Outreach activities during September include:

- Television and radio public service announcements
- Billboards in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange (English and Spanish)
- Banners in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese)
- Bench bulletins at Beaumont bus stops
- Yard signs in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange
- 43,000 flyers distributed through City of Beaumont water bills
- 30,000 postcards mailed to low-income households in Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties

“Sundays in August and September”

The “Gift of Life” / American Cancer Society Prostate Cancer Support Group, which was formed nearly two years ago and meets monthly at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Beaumont, is comprised of nearly 50 active volunteers. To further highlight the three prostate cancer screenings events, members of the group are helping to convey the important message of early detection.

Support group members **Jack Davidson, Joe King, James Nichols, Kurt Ploeger, John Raney, Dr. Edward Senigaur, Harold Steward, Donald Taft, Sam Verde, and R.O. Williams**, as well as volunteers **Dr. Hubert Monroe, Dr. Richard Price, and Joe Tims**, are participating in “**Sundays in August and September**,” an innovative campaign in which prostate cancer survivors and other program volunteers focus on religious institutions with large populations of African American congregants, and share their knowledge about the potential health benefits of annual testing. Their personal testimonies tremendously impact men who are hesitant about the exam.

Other efforts of the group include handing out event flyers and putting up yard signs in communities across Southeast Texas.

“Sundays in August and September” Schedule:

(featuring Prostate Cancer Support Group and Volunteer speakers with contact numbers)

Beaumont:

- **Sunlight Baptist**
1275 Cedar
September 3 – 11:20 a.m.
Harold Steward – 898-3985

- **East Mt. Olive Baptist**
1197 Corley
September 10 – 11:00 a.m.
Kurt Ploeger – 656-2476

- **Greater Zion Baptist**
2317 Cable
September 10 – 11:20 a.m.
John Raney, Jr. – 842-2485

- **McCabe Roberts Avenue Methodist**
1205 Roberts
September 10 – 10:45 a.m.
Donald Taft - 833-8656

- **Antioch Baptist**
3920 W. Cardinal Drive
September 17 – 11:00 a.m.
Donald Taft

- **West Tabernacle Baptist**
3605 Waco
September 17 – 11:00 a.m.
Dr. Richard Price – 842-1769

- **Douglas Memorial**
1370 Ewing
September 17 - 11:00 a.m.
Dr. Hubert Monroe - 898-8248

- **Mt. Rose Baptist**
1205 Gladys
September 17 – 11:20 a.m.
Jack Davidson – 892-5447

Port Arthur:

- **First 6th Street Baptist Church**
548 Abe Lincoln
September 3 – 11:00 a.m.
James Nichols – 892-2802

- **Thomas Boulevard Church of Christ**

2948 Thomas Blvd.
September 3 – 9:45 a.m.
Sam Verde – 727-1069

Orange:

- **St. Paul CME Methodist**
1201 N. 4th St.
September 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Joe King – 886-2560
- **Mt. Zion**
512 W. John St.
September 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Joe Tims – 886-1965
- **Salem United Methodist**
402 W. John St.
September 10 – 11:00 a.m.
(Speaker TBA)

Activities have already taken place at the following churches:

Beaumont:

- **Magnolia Baptist**
August 6
Kurt Ploeger
- **Bordon Chapel**
August 6
Harold Steward
- **Ebenezer Baptist**
August 13
Dr. Edward Senigaur – 842-3448
- **St. John Baptist**
August 13
R. O. Williams – 835-0775
- **St. Peter Baptist**
August 20
Dr. Edward Senigaur

Port Arthur:

- **New St. John Baptist Church**
James Nichols

Prostate Cancer Statistics:

- In 2006 alone, it is predicted that more than **200,000** men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, **12, 690** of which are projected to occur in Texas (more than lung cancer diagnoses in the state).¹
- Prostate Cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men, with more than **27,000** men expected to die of the disease this year. An estimated **1,480** Texas men will die from prostate cancer in 2006, the fifth highest state rate in the nation.¹
- On average, the rate of occurrence of prostate cancer is 60% higher in African American men than in Caucasian men.¹
- Notwithstanding these statistics, the five-year survival rate for men whose prostate cancer is diagnosed in local and regional stages is close to 100%. Early diagnosis, in addition to treatment advancements, is said to account for this high survival rate.¹
- Prostate Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in males in Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin Counties.²

¹ American Cancer Society

² Texas Cancer Data Center

Attached is a description of the “Gift of Life” mission and annual programming.



Mission and Annual Programming

The “Gift of Life” is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization located in Beaumont, Texas, serving all of Southeast Texas. Operating for nearly 12 years, the agency is dedicated to **decreasing the incidence of death associated with breast and prostate cancer**. Its mission is accomplished through (1) **provision of free mammography and prostate cancer screenings** for people of limited financial means who are uninsured and underinsured, along with **access to treatment and follow-up care** through a **referral link with the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston**; and (2) conducting **extensive community educational outreach**. This mission has recently been expanded to include **smoking cessation and prevention activities and testicular cancer education**.

A cooperative effort of **Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospitals, the Julie & Ben Rogers Cancer Institute, the Dauphin Cancer Screening & Prevention Center, local physicians, the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston** and its local clinics, **the UTMB Cancer Stop Program, and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center**, the “Gift of Life” has funded over **11,300** free mammograms and **3,600** free prostate cancer screenings, and has conducted nearly **400** educational outreach programs since its inception.

As one of the largest cancer screening and awareness organizations of its type in Texas, the “Gift of Life” directly serves more than **6,000** recipients annually (in addition to publishing a program newsletter several times a year that is distributed to over **15,000** people in Southeast Texas and beyond and conveys the important message of early detection). Each year, cancer awareness information is disseminated to **several thousand** individuals at over **50** educational outreach presentations and area health fairs; approximately **450** men receive free prostate cancer screenings; **750** medically underserved women receive free mammograms at Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospitals in Beaumont and Orange; and **750** additional women are given free mammograms and clinical breast exams on the UTMB-Galveston mobile van at **20** Southeast Texas van sites. Access to follow-up care for eligible individuals who need testing and treatment following their screenings is also provided. Further, the “Gift of Life” minivan is available for clients who require transportation to and from the program’s cancer screening tests and exams.

The “Gift of Life” also offers multiple yearly programs including a **Survivors’ Celebration** honoring breast and prostate cancer survivors and a **Health Forum** for medical professionals, with approximately **650 attendees** (this year’s event will focus on smoking cessation and prevention). Program services were expanded in 2004 to include the following initiatives: (1) **ASPIRE, A Smoking Prevention Interactive Experience**, featuring M. D. Anderson-developed curriculum introduced into Beaumont Independent School District 9th grade health classes; (2) the **Prostate Cancer Support Group**, created in association with the American Cancer Society, which meets monthly and now includes more than 50 members; (3) the **Testicular Cancer Outreach Program** presented to senior males at area high schools; and (4) a **Heightened Cancer Awareness Campaign** during both Prostate and Breast Cancer Awareness Months. **“Don’t Smoke Your Life Away,”** a community-wide anti-smoking campaign targeting both adults and adolescents, was launched in 2005.

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