

## Deirdre Imus Speaks on the Dangers of Environmental Toxins at the St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound Breast Cancer Luncheon

**Bridgeport, CT, October 27, 2009** – St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound held its 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Breast Cancer Luncheon on Friday, October 23 at the Holiday Inn in Bridgeport. Co-chaired by Georgeanne F. Berg of Aquarion Water Company and Joyce A. Riccio, Esq. who practices law in Fairfield, the luncheon was attended by approximately 500 guests and raised more than \$200,000 for the SWIM's breast cancer programs. These programs help women right here in the community battling the disease and provide free mammograms for the elderly and underserved. The SWIM also provides wigs and prostheses, medication assistance, free transportation to treatments and appointments, day-care scholarships and support groups in addition to financial assistance with mortgages, utilities and more on a case-by-case basis. Thanks to underwriting sponsorships, 100% of the proceeds will go to the funding of these programs.

The guest speaker, Westport resident Deirdre Imus, is the founder and president of The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology at Hackensack University Medical Center. With her husband Don Imus, she is the co-founder and co-director of the Imus Cattle Ranch for Kids with Cancer. Deirdre is the author of the newest book in the best-selling *Green This!* series, *The Essential Green You! Easy Ways to Detox Your Diet, Your Body, and Your Life*, and the second book, *Growing Up Green, Baby and Child Care*. Her 2007 *New York Times* bestseller, *Green This! Volume 1: Greening Your Cleaning*, offers a wealth of insights and expertise for protecting families from harmful chemicals. She is also author of *The Imus Ranch: Cooking for Kids and Cowboys*, a national bestseller.

Imus, who owns her own non-toxic green cleaning line called Greening the Cleaning, spoke about the impact of environmental toxins on the health of Americans, citing that according to the National Health Institute and the American Cancer Society, "approximately 85% of cancers have been caused by environmental toxins." She also pointed out that "despite earlier detection and an increase in cancer screenings thanks to organizations like St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound, the numbers of people dying from breast cancer and prostate cancer have not decreased." She applauded St. Vincent's green efforts, calling the organization a leader in the state and local community for switching to non-toxic cleaning agents back in 2006, becoming the first hospital in the state to become a smoke-free campus in 2007 and for building their new Elizabeth Pfriem SWIM Center for Cancer Care to green standards.

Receiving St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound Breast Cancer Luncheon Awards were Maureen Collins Pelletier, RN, OCN of Black Rock and Betsy Rice, RNC of Trumbull. Both women have shown strong dedication to breast cancer patients through their work as Breast Cancer Nurse Navigators at St. Vincent's Medical Center and through the time they have spent volunteering and spreading awareness for St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound.

As Breast Cancer Nurse Navigators, Pelletier and Rice guide patients from diagnosis well into recovery, easing anxiety, expediting care, putting them in touch with resources and remain a constant as they transition through practitioners at St. Vincent's.



Westport resident Deirdre Imus (right) was the guest speaker at the St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Breast Cancer Luncheon held on Friday, October 23, 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Bridgeport. Imus is the founder and president of The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology at Hackensack University Medical Center, co-founder and co-director of the Imus Cattle Ranch for Kids with Cancer and a *New York Times* best selling author. Here, she is pictured with Trumbull resident Georgeanne F. Berg of Aquarion Water Company and Monroe resident Diane Mercado of Redding Consultants. Berg is co-chair of the Luncheon along with Joyce A. Riccio, Esq. of Fairfield. Mercado chairs the event's silent auction. The event raised more than \$200,000 for St. Vincent's SWIM Across the Sound's breast cancer programs, which include free mammograms for the elderly and underserved, wigs and prostheses, medication assistance, free transportation to treatments and appointments, daycare scholarships and support groups in addition to financial assistance with mortgages, utilities and more.

“I have often said that I could not imagine working without the SWIM. As cancer patients go through treatment, problems and frustrations with day-to-day life escalate. It is so rewarding to be able to give an elderly woman battling breast cancer cab fare for her ride home after treatment when she had to take two buses to get to the Medical Center,” Pelletier said.

#### **About St. Vincent’s SWIM Across the Sound**

St. Vincent’s SWIM Across the Sound is a charitable, grass roots organization run by the St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation of Bridgeport, CT. For 22 years, the SWIM has had a unique niche, providing cancer education, screening and prevention programs at low- or no-cost for the elderly and underserved. In addition, the SWIM helps individual cancer patients on a case-by-case basis with specific needs, such as the funding of wigs and prostheses, medication assistance, free transportation to treatments and appointments, day-care scholarships, support groups and more. The charity raises funds through events such as the SWIM Marathon, Breast Cancer Luncheon, Walk/Run for Cancer and Prostate Cancer Celebrity Dinner. Wherever possible, the SWIM covers costs and expenses of events through corporate sponsorships, and staffing overhead is covered by the St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation. The SWIM’s main area of reach is eastern Fairfield County, but outreach programs extend to other areas of Connecticut with the SWIM’s Hartford Chapter and annual fund raisers for New Haven County, as well as support for Connecticut’s first responders and correction officers with cancer. The SWIM’s Teen SmokeStoppers program has reached 100,000 children throughout the entire state to date. The SWIM raised \$2.65 million in the 2009 fiscal year and helps more than 20,000 people annually. For more information, contact the St. Vincent’s Medical Center Foundation at (203) 576-5451 or visit [www.swimacrossthesound.org](http://www.swimacrossthesound.org).

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