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KOMEN FOR THE CURE SURVEYS IDENTIFY TARGET AREAS

TUPELO, Miss.—The North Mississippi Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, headquartered in Tupelo, recently circulated surveys to area hospitals and doctor's offices. The surveys helped the local get a profile of the community's understanding of breast cancer prevention.

The survey found that three counties – Clay, Monroe and Tishomingo – had a high level of late stage diagnosis and a high mortality rate. All the surveys from those three counties were placed in a drawing for a \$200 gift card and gift package from Race for the Cure, with one participant from each county winning.

Dionne Keys of Central Elementary School in West Point was the winner for Clay County. Keys is a physical education coach as well as a health teacher with more than 30 years of teaching experience in Mississippi.

"I live a healthy lifestyle because I want to be an example for my students so they can see me do most of the things I ask them to do in class every day," she said. "I get an annual breast exam because I have lost close friends to breast cancer, so I know the importance of catching it early."

Katie Taylor of Tishomingo County also won a gift card. Taylor works at North Mississippi Medical Center-Iuka in environmental services. Tishomingo County has the highest late stage diagnosis and mortality rate due to breast cancer in Mississippi. "Several women who work for NMMC-Iuka have been affected by or are survivors of breast cancer." Taylor said. According to the survey results, one of the top four reasons that people in Tishomingo County don't get mammograms is because they can't afford the travel cost. Part of the money raised by Susan G. Komen North Mississippi can be granted for transportation costs to and from screening locations.

The final winner was Mary Walden of Monroe County, who works in the nursing program at Itawamba Community College. Walden works closely with breast cancer survivors in her field, which inspired her to help by filling out the survey.

The local Race for the Cure raises money for grants to educate women about breast cancer, create awareness and provide screenings to under-served and under-insured women in North Mississippi. Up to 75 percent of the net proceeds from the 2009 Komen North Mississippi Race for the Cure® will be distributed in 15 counties in north Mississippi, and the remaining 25 percent goes toward Komen's research program. Since 1998, Komen North Mississippi affiliate has given more than \$1 million in grants within North Mississippi communities.

"Much more has to be done to educate the people of north Mississippi about breast cancer," said Teri Browder-Radcliff, affiliate coordinator of the North Mississippi Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure in Tupelo. "Our mission is to eradicate breast cancer forever. That's why we are searching high and low for sponsors to help donate money and goods so we can get the word out." If you have any questions or would like to become a sponsor or volunteer, contact Browder-Radcliff at (662) 377-4903 or by e-mail at tbradcliff@gmail.com