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Attention: Internet Reporters, Health and Lifestyle Editors

New Social Networking Website Connects Patients and Caregivers

The Healing Project (www.thehealingproject.org) is launching today Voices Who Care, an innovative social networking website for individuals dealing with life-threatening or chronic illnesses. This website is designed to connect the patient and caregiver communities by providing individuals with a forum where they can meet online.

Social networking sites have become an important online tool in our arsenal of interpersonal communication and relationships. Visits to social networking sites have increased almost 100% in the past year and people spend almost three times as much time on this type of website than at non-social networking sites.

Key features of the website include:

- * Person-to-person search by disease category
- * Individual pages including bios, blogs, photo galleries
- * Email capabilities
- * Community bulletin boards

"The opportunity to connect with others through an online forum is necessary because it allows patients and caregivers to get support without the confines of the traditional in-person support group," says founder of The Healing Project, Debra LaChance.

The Healing Project website currently includes a comprehensive Resource Center developed to ease the overwhelming process of web-based information search. The Healing Project Resource Center has been designed with the patient in mind, enabling easy and direct access to a wide variety of medical information as well as a database that includes organizations that provide low-cost or free health care services. Unlike traditional search engines, the website serves as a Personalized Patient Guide that offers professionally screened web pages as well as a tailored inventory of national, state and local resources.

Available for interview:

- * **Debra LaChance**, Founder, The Healing Project who can discuss the need for social networking as a patient resource from her perspective as a breast cancer survivor
- * **Melissa Marr**, President, The Healing Project who can discuss the importance of comprehensive Resource Center and Voices Who Care; while explaining other patient support projects under development

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