

Contact: Beth Bukata
703-839-7332
bethb@astro.org

L.A. Breast Cancer Activist Honored With Survivor Circle Award

Fairfax, Va., October 16, 2007 – The American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology is pleased to announce that Stefanie LaRue of Woodland Hills, Calif., has been selected as the 2007 Survivor Circle Award winner. Ms. LaRue will be presented with her award and a \$1,000 cash prize on Sunday, October 28, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. at the Los Angeles Convention Center during ASTRO’s 49th Annual Meeting, which will take place October 28 through November 1 in Los Angeles.

The Survivor Circle Award recognizes a person living with cancer in the Los Angeles metropolitan area who has devoted his or her time to helping others who are living with cancer in their community. Ms. LaRue was diagnosed with Stage-4 Advanced/Metastatic Breast Cancer in 2005 at the age of 30. Before receiving her diagnosis, she was misdiagnosed by three doctors who told her that she probably had a breast infection because she was too “young and healthy” to have breast cancer. Ms. LaRue now devotes her time to educating men as well as women and the medical and insurance communities about diagnosing breast cancer and preventing misdiagnoses in women under the age of 40.

“It is always inspiring to see a person who is diagnosed with a very devastating type of cancer at a young age turn that experience into an opportunity to educate and help others who are in a similar situation,” said Louis Harrison, M.D., a radiation oncologist at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City and president of the Board of Directors for ASTRO. “Ms. LaRue’s dedication to her cause will hopefully raise awareness that breast cancer can strike at any age.”

According to the Young Survival Coalition, an international, nonprofit organization dedicated specifically to the issues and concerns of young women with breast cancer, there are more than 250,000 women in the U.S. under the age of 40 who are living with breast cancer; however, there is no effective screening tool for this age group.

Ms. LaRue founded the LaRue Foundation as a platform to build awareness of breast cancer in young women. Her mission is to prevent more women from being misdiagnosed strictly because of their age and not fitting “the profile”. She is a Project LEAD graduate and is actively involved in the Young Survival Coalition, American Cancer Society, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization, the

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8280 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive • Suite 500 • Fairfax • VA • 22031
phone 703-502-1550 • fax 703-502-7852 • web www.astro.org

Metastatic Breast Cancer Network, and the Los Angeles Breast Cancer Alliance, as well as other organizations. Ms. LaRue has also attended the National Breast Cancer Coalition Conference in Washington, D.C., testifying in front of Congress for the past two years as one of the youngest of 600 women lobbying for passage of the National Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act. While receiving radiation therapy treatments at UCLA, Ms. LaRue was a participant in the award winning documentary “The Quiet War,” a movie profiling five diverse women living with Metastatic Breast Cancer.

“I wish I would have heard about someone like me, at my age, getting breast cancer before I got sick,” Ms. LaRue said. “That is why I am so dedicated and passionate about truly branding breast cancer in younger women. There are new voices, new faces affected by this disease and people need to pay urgent attention to the message...this could happen to you, too!”

The Survivor Circle was established in 2003 as a way for ASTRO to give back to the cities that it visits during its Annual Meeting. Each year, ASTRO partners with two local organizations to establish relationships with patient advocacy organizations and radiation oncologists and to raise money to support these groups in their work to help people living with cancer and their loved ones. This year ASTRO has partnered with The Wellness Community – South Bay Cities and Vital Options International.

The ASTRO Annual Meeting is the premier scientific meeting in radiation oncology and attracts more than 11,000 oncologists of all disciplines, physicists, biologists, nurses and other healthcare professionals from all over the world. The theme of this year’s meeting is “Treating Cancer while Preserving Quality of Life” and the program will promote interdisciplinary collaboration and the exchange of ideas, information and practical solutions for prevention, organ function preservation, treatment options and quality of life for patients.

For more information on Survivor Circle, the Survivor Circle Award or ASTRO’s 49th Annual Meeting, please visit www.astro.org. For more information on radiation therapy, please visit www.rtanswers.org.

If you would like an interview with Ms. LaRue please contact Beth Bukata at 703-839-7332 before October 26 or on site at 703-431-2332.

ASTRO is the largest radiation oncology society in the world, with 9,000 members who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, biology and physics, the Society is dedicated to improving patient care through education, clinical practice, advancement of science and advocacy.

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