

Advocates Converge at Breast Cancer Conference

BY MELISSA WEBER

Eleven years ago, the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium debuted a new program that encouraged breast cancer survivors and advocates to join those learning about the latest in breast cancer research alongside experts in the field.

The year before, breast cancer survivors Joy Moose and Dale Eastman, co-founders of [The Alamo Breast Cancer Foundation](#), a San Antonio-based nonprofit, were asked by the symposium's directors to organize a program for the growing number of advocates who were attending each year's meeting. After exchanging a quick glance, the two survivors immediately said "yes," Moose recalled. The result was the ABCF Advocate Program, which started in December 1997 to provide scholarships to eligible patient advocates.

This year's program brings together 35 advocates from the United States, Canada, and the country of Georgia. For three nights starting Thursday, the advocates will hear from doctors and researchers who will discuss the day's highlights and offer insights on the data, followed by a question-and-answer session. Experts for this year's "Hot Topics Mentor Sessions" include Susan Love, MD; Powel Brown, MD, PhD; Peter Ravdin, MD, PhD; Julie Gralow, MD; and others.

Each advocate is assigned a "hot topic" to cover during the symposium. He or she develops a report on that topic, which are then compiled with those created by other advocates and distributed by ABCF through a CD-ROM, webcast, and printed publication.

In addition, ABCF Advocate Program participants had the opportunity on Wednesday to attend "Project Lead: Advanced Topics," a session presented by the National Breast Cancer Coalition with support from ABCF. Educational lectures on signal transduction and epigenetics provided advocates with details on the latest advancements in the basic science of breast cancer.

The webcast of the 2008 mentor sessions will be available at www.abcfpatientadvocateprogram.com by mid-February 2009. Archived webcasts from prior meetings are available now.

Advocate Program scholarship applications for the 2009 symposium will be available in April 2009.

Read more of *CURE's* coverage of the 31st annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium at <http://media.curetoday.com/htmlmail/sabcs>.

