



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **VAL SKINNER FOUNDATION TOPS \$11 MILLION IN DONATIONS**

### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Breast Cancer Event Celebrates Olympic Connections**

BAY HEAD, N.J. – Thanks to the support of leading LPGA players, the Val Skinner Foundation exceeded the \$11 million mark in funds raised for breast cancer awareness and education at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual LIFE (LPGA Pros in the Fight to Eradicate Cancer) event Monday at Mountain Ridge Country Club in West Caldwell, NJ.

Skinner, a former LPGA golfer, was once again joined by fellow LPGA players, including eight 2106 Olympians, as her foundation celebrated its continued fight against breast cancer. Olympic gold medalist and figure skating icon Scott Hamilton was honored as a LIFE Hero at the event.

Participating LPGA players included:

Marina Alex	Laetitia Beck*	Kathleen Ekey	Sandra Gal*
Vicky Hurst	Tiffany Joh	Danille Kang	Brittany Lincicome
Alejandra Llanaez*	Gaby Lopez*	Mo Martin	Giulia Molinaro*
Anna Nordqvist*	Gerina Piller*	Jodi Shadoff	Sarah Jane Smith
Mariajo Uribe*	Alison Walshe		

\*2016 Olympian

“We had another wonderful day at our LIFE event. While the golf is always fun, it’s the program that reminds us all why we are here,” said Skinner. “When we honor people like Scott Hamilton and Kriss Fierro, also a LIFE Hero, we refocus on the great need that still exists as we seek to eradicate this horrible disease.”

At the event, Skinner announced a donation of \$400,000 to the Cancer Institute of New Jersey for The LIFE Center patient services, the Gene Express Project as part of her foundation’s Precision Medicine Research work and the MARSH Grant for Life that supports triple negative breast cancer research.

In addition, Skinner awarded the final installment of her foundation’s \$750,000 commitment to support the Decoding Cancer platform that launched last year in coordination with Discovery Education. Decoding Cancer will now continue in perpetuity.

Because it’s essential to support the study of cancer in the classroom and facilitate meaningful discussions among high school teachers, students and families, the Val Skinner Foundation, in collaboration with the LIFE Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the Rutgers School of Public Health and Discovery Education, last year created Decoding Cancer. An interactive biology and genetics education initiative, Decoding Cancer helps students and their families understand the science behind cancer and supports the improvement of students’ science literacy. In addition, through innovative biology and genetics-focused digital content, this innovative partnership introduces students to future careers in solving the cancer epidemic.

Decoding Cancer is powered by BioCONNECT. The BioCONNECT curriculum was developed by Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey in collaboration with the Center for School and Community-Based Research and Education at the Rutgers School of Public Health. It is an integrated curriculum supplement that enhances learning by encouraging students to transfer their knowledge of biology and genetics to real-life situations using breast cancer as the context.

Since its launch in 2016, Decoding Cancer has reached an estimated 1.1 million high school biology students with a first-of-its-kind precision medicine Virtual Lab that includes health and biomedical career profiles aimed at inspiring the next generation of cancer professionals. Discovery Communication's TLC Network has also helped to spread Decoding Cancer's message and impact to millions more.

Over the past 17 years, the Val Skinner Foundation LIFE Event has been one of the largest single-day breast cancer fundraisers in the country. The foundation has served as a driving force in the development and implementation of significant awareness and education initiatives.

At the 2017 event, Skinner honored Hamilton, who survived testicular cancer 20 years ago and was diagnosed with his third brain tumor in 2016, for his tireless work as an advocate for cancer patients and their families through his Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation. Hamilton's mother passed away from breast cancer in 1977.

She also recognized Fierro as a LIFE Hero. Fierro, who came to the U.S. from Mexico when she was 15, was diagnosed in 2014 at age 34. Despite going through ongoing chemotherapy and raising her family, she attacks each day with a positive attitude and a desire to help other patients at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

Skinner played on the LPGA Tour for 21 years, won six times and spent seven years ranked in the top 15 in the world. She is a member of three golf Halls of Fame and has received numerous awards for her philanthropy and advocacy for breast cancer research. In addition to overseeing her Foundation's work, Skinner competes on the Legends Tour and worked for more than 12 years with the Golf Channel.

More information on the Val Skinner Foundation, LIFE Event and programs funded by the event can be found at [www.valskinnerfoundation.org](http://www.valskinnerfoundation.org).

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