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VAL SKINNER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH DISCOVERY EDUCATION

BAY HEAD, N.J. - Former LPGA professional Val Skinner announced that her foundation is partnering with Discovery Education to launch a national innovative science curriculum for high school students focused on cancer genetics. Skinner made the announcement at the 16th annual LIFE Event (LPGA Pros in the Fight to Eradicate breast cancer) held at Mountain Ridge Country Club in West Caldwell, N.J.

Skinner, joined by some of the LPGA's biggest stars, raised more than \$500,000 on Monday. The Val Skinner Foundation has now raised more than \$10 million over the past 16 years for scientific research, early detection and educational programs, plus clinical support for those affected by breast cancer.

In 2008, the Val Skinner Foundation, in collaboration with the LIFE Center at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey (RCINJ) and the Rutgers School of Public Health established BioCONNECT, an inquiry-based biology curriculum for high school students designed to improve science skills and increase breast cancer awareness. The program was piloted in New Jersey and later introduced in schools in South Carolina and Florida.

"I am so proud to announce our plans regarding BioCONNECT, a program piloted in New Jersey schools, will now reach millions of students and educators through Discovery Education," said Skinner. "The core mission of the foundation is built around driving awareness through education particularly among young people, so this is a perfect fit. This program is a game changer because of its ability to enable our younger generation to see how healthy lifestyle choices will benefit them long term."

Through the reach of the Discovery Education network, the program will be available nationwide to more than 35 million students and 3.8 million teachers.

"Discovery Education is proud to join forces with the Val Skinner Foundation and the RCINJ to empower young people and their families with digital tools and resources to help increase cancer awareness and advocacy," said Joni Henderson, Vice President, Corporate Partnerships, Discovery Education. "Through this partnership, all students, educators and communities nationwide will have access to the BioCONNECT curriculum which is designed to provide a greater scientific understanding of cancer, articulate preventative measures in fighting cancer, and digitally showcase the STEM careers that are working towards finding a cure."

The program, also being developed in collaboration with the Rutgers School of Public Health, is expected to launch in fall 2015.

"Now is the perfect time to make this innovative program available to millions of students and educators. With the national focus on precision medicine and what genome research can mean to scientific discovery in the future, our youth will be intrigued, engaged and most importantly better informed," said Dr. Deb Toppmeyer, Director of the LIFE Center at RCINJ.

The Val Skinner Foundation also announced the Malaya Southern Kelly grant at Monday's event. This grant will fund the RCINJ precision medicine researchers in Malaya's name, a 2013 LIFE Event Hero who passed away in late 2014. The foundation funded a similar grant in 2013 honoring LIFE Hero Bridget Spence. To date, \$150,000 has been placed with a committee who will identify projects believed to be on the verge of significant breakthroughs in the field of breast cancer treatment.

“Malaya said that she wanted her life, her battle and her death to have value in the greater fight against breast cancer, and the foundation would like to contribute to making that a reality,” Skinner said. “This grant will support researchers capable of making promising strides.”

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 has competed 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.

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