



This writing is about awareness and a call to action for the prevention of breast cancer. It is not intended to put down the efforts of people, including myself, who have often sincerely and diligently participated in activities associated with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is not intended to discourage women from doing self-exams or having mammograms. This writing is dedicated to the memory of Gail Parker, former ECO-Action staff member, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 23 after finding a lump through self-exam.

Carol Williams

RECLAIMING OCTOBER AS "STOP CANCER WHERE IT STARTS" MONTH

October is "National Breast Cancer Awareness Month." National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, now in its 17th year, **was developed to sell two things:**

- 1) The concept that your best protection against breast cancer is early detection and treatment; and
- 2) The product, a cancer-fighting (and cancer-causing) drug, called tamoxifen.

It has been 17 years of attempted manipulation of women and their families, health care professionals and nonprofit agencies. National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is about keeping the focus on detection and treatment instead of on the *causes* and *prevention* of breast cancer.

Have you questioned why none of the official materials, posters, public service announcements, and advertisement of events ever mention cancer-causing chemicals from environmental pollution? No mention of pesticides. No mention of the daily dose of toxic chemicals and endocrine disrupting chemicals (including chemicals that mimic estrogen) in the air we breathe, the water we drink and in the products we use. No mention of limiting your exposure to these chemicals or to ionizing radiation (a KNOWN cause of breast cancer). And why is this so?

Follow the money, facts and implications:

- Throughout the 60's and 70's, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) was one of the largest makers of pesticides, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and paper.
- In 1978, ICI's pharmaceutical division developed NOLVADEX® (tamoxifen citrate).

- According to the company's own materials, "for the first time" with the development of NOLVADEX, "a specially trained hospital sales force" was established to "support this new product."
- **In 1985, ICI designed, founded and funded "Breast Cancer Awareness Month."**
- Some years later, ICI spun off its pharmaceutical and ag-chemical divisions into the Zeneca Group. In the split, Zeneca took with it "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" division.
- Today, **AstraZeneca***—maker of tamoxifen, the most widely used breast cancer treatment—is the sole funder and **holds the copyright for all materials and content published using the title "National Breast Cancer Awareness Month"** (NBCAM).

To verify the above, check out three of the company's websites: www.astrazeneca-us.com, www.NOLVADEX.com, and www.NBCAM.org.

Researching further, you will find that there is one other reason that National Breast Cancer Awareness Month focuses on "detection" of cancer *only* and does not reveal anything regarding toxic chemical exposure and its links to cancer. Until just two years ago, Zeneca, creator and controller of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, was also in the business of selling pesticides and related products, including making at least \$300 million a year off of Acetochlor, a cancer-causing, chlorine-based herbicide.

The company was also named in a lawsuit by the federal government in 1990 for allegedly dumping DDT and PCBs into Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors.

With this knowledge, now what?

Currently, there are few-to-no good choices out there for people with breast cancer. Mammography's safety and effectiveness has been found to be suspect in different studies. Tamoxifen, although now known to cause uterine cancer, stroke and blood clots in some people, is the most successful treatment to date to keep breast cancer from reappearing. Do the benefits outweigh the hazards? Alternative therapies to radiation and chemotherapy work for some. There are stories all across the spectrum—some with happy and encouraging endings and some ending with inspiring courage but tragic loss of life.

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*AtraZeneca is also sponsor of **Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**.

Contact us to find out how ECO-Action can help your community group.

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Reclaiming October... (Continued)

This information and the implications are so overwhelming that we tend to turn away from it. It's ugly. It's painful. Yet, consider this: 90% of the women who get breast cancer have none of the current "official" risk factors (gender, age, genetics, family history, etc), except for being female. There is so much more we need to know and learn about breast cancer.

Hopefully you will see the need not to be "turned off" but be "turned on" to passionately take up the Call to Action. Let's work on reducing and eliminating toxics in our environment that have not been proven harmless. Join me in making Breast Cancer Prevention the focus of our efforts for the young women who are following behind us.

ECO-ACTION TRAINING THE TRAINER SERIES

—a learning initiative for social change

The Training the Trainer Series is a year long program consisting of four weekend seminars on subjects including political and environmental education; power analysis and organizing; translating vision into action; accountability; and transfer techniques to aid in building and sustaining community-based organizations working for positive change.

ECO-Action is now accepting applications for the Class of 2003. To have an application sent to you, call Dr.Yomi Noibi at 404-584-6499 or Email: yomi@eco-act.org. Space is limited to no more than 15 participants.

Here's what you can do:

- Join with us and groups like Breast Cancer Action (www.bcaction.org) to reclaim October as "Stop Cancer Where It Starts" month. You can sign up with Breast Cancer Action to receive alerts and materials on the latest research and studies on environmental causes of cancer and other health problems.
- Share this information with friends and family. Information is useless unless you use it. Teach each other that *Detection* is not the same as *Prevention*.
- Host a film screening and discussion of "EXPOSURE-Environmental Links to Breast Cancer." Contact ECO-Action for us to facilitate the film viewing. It just takes a room, a TV & VCR and a few friends 404-584-6499.



Class of 2002 and Trainers Lyndell Robinson, Yomi Noibi, Kevin Reid, Liz Buckley, Robert Gaskins, Ranowul Jzar, Kyle Bryant, Tina Bellou, Louversia Wiggins, Lucy Grider-Bradley, Carol Williams, Bruce Morton

ECO-Action staff members are available to provide technical assistance, conduct workshops, presentations and provide coaching for groups wanting to learn more about toxic chemicals and health, organizing for change, and strategies that work!

Thanks to Community Recycling, Inc. for its Continued Support of this Report

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