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CONTACTS:

Bob Lundblad
The MetaCancer Foundation
(760) 231-9636
bob@metacancer.org

Michelle Pollak
The Wellness Community
(202) 255-8563
michelle@thewellnesscommunity.org

The MetaCancer Foundation and The Wellness Community Make Online Support Groups Available for People Living With Metastatic Cancer

Rockville, MD – January 10, 2007 – Each year, more than half a million people in the United States will develop or die of metastatic cancer¹. To better meet the needs of and to provide psychosocial support for people living with metastatic cancer, The MetaCancer Foundation and The Wellness Community announced that online support groups for metastatic cancer survivors are available through a grant made possible by The MetaCancer Foundation. The weekly, 90 minute, password-protected, professionally-led support groups are available, free of charge, to metastatic cancer survivors and their loved ones. Access can also be found through MetaCancer's website (www.metacancer.org).

"We are excited to partner with The MetaCancer Foundation to bring social and emotional support to people living with metastatic cancer," said Mitch Golant, PhD, Vice President of Research and Development of The Wellness Community. "We currently have groups that have metastatic patients in them, but we are now able to better address the specific needs of metastatic cancer survivors, thanks to the support of The MetaCancer Foundation."

The Virtual Wellness Community is designed to enhance access to free cancer support services through the use of technology and to minimize common barriers to care such as geography. Features of Online Support Groups at The Virtual Wellness Community include meeting weekly at a scheduled time for 90 minutes in a setting that includes no more than 10-12 participants facilitated by licensed professionals trained in The Wellness Community's Patient Active model, which states that "People with cancer who participate in their fight for recovery from cancer will improve the quality of their life and *may* enhance the possibility of their recovery." Online Support Groups at The Virtual Wellness Community are available for adults 21 years of age and older and focus on psychological support, as well as education.

¹ American Cancer Society, 12/10/2006,
www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_1x_How_Many_People_Get_Advanced_Cancer.asp?nav=cri

“Metastatic cancer survivors are often traveling back and forth to oncology clinics and hospitals to get treatment as frequently as several times per week,” said Michael Lundblad, President of The MetaCancer Foundation. “Even if there is a metastatic-specific support group available at the hospital, which is not always the case, another trip back can seem like just too much. With an online support group, people can get the tremendous benefits of professional support from the comfort of their own homes. We’re very excited to see this new initiative take off, since it so clearly addresses our mission of providing inspiration and support for metastatic cancer survivors and their caregivers.”

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About The MetaCancer Foundation

The mission of The MetaCancer Foundation is to provide inspiration and support for survivors and caregivers living with metastatic cancers. While cancer can begin anywhere in the body, it is designated as "metastatic" once it spreads to locations distant from the original tumor. Many non-profit organizations are dedicated to specific kinds of cancer defined by the primary tumor, or cancer in general, but very few focus on cancer that has metastasized.

Metastatic cancers are often considered to be incurable or terminal, but The MetaCancer Foundation encourages survivors and caregivers to "go meta": to think about how one is confronting cancer and how one can positively construct that experience. MetaCancer encourages dialogue among those with very different types of metastatic cancer (breast, prostate, colorectal, ovarian, bladder/urinary, skin, lung, and others), even though respective treatment protocols and medical issues may seem to have little in common with each other. The common factor, unfortunately, is cure rates that are dramatically lower than the cure rates for early-stage or localized cancers. The psychological and emotional impact of this fact means that metastatic cancer survivors and caregivers can have more in common with others confronting metastatic cancers, regardless of where they started, than with those facing an early stage of the same type of cancer.

The MetaCancer Foundation is committed to addressing these unique needs and concerns. Other MetaCancer initiatives include its innovative website www.metacancer.org, funding for metastatic cancer support groups, research grants for innovative work on psychosocial aspects of metastatic cancers, and resource rooms in memory of Elizabeth Anne Prostic. More information on these grants is available at www.metacancer.org.

The MetaCancer Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to The MetaCancer Foundation, Inc., 11 North Washington Street, Suite 600, Rockville, MD 20850.

About The Wellness Community

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in June 2007, The Wellness Community is an international non-profit organization dedicated to providing free support, education and hope to people with cancer and their loved ones. Through participation in professionally-led support groups, educational workshops, nutrition and exercise programs, and mind/body classes, people affected by cancer learn vital skills that enable them to regain control, reduce isolation and restore hope regardless of the stage of their disease. Today, there are 21 Wellness Communities around the United States plus 43 satellite and off-site programs, two centers abroad in Tel Aviv and Tokyo, five centers in development, and online at The Virtual Wellness Community. For more information, visit www.thewellnesscommunity.org.