

# Be a Breast Friend Project



[www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca)

## Overview

The Be a Breast Friend Project capitalized on the uniquely intimate relationship women have with their stylists. The project empowered stylists to talk with their clients about breast health and the importance of regular breast cancer screening for women 50+.

## Objectives

1. To build community capacity by engaging stylists to act as lay health educators in promoting regular breast cancer screening.
2. To increase awareness of four key breast health messages:
  - Mammograms can save lives.
  - Women 50+ need regular mammograms.
  - All women should know how their breasts look and feel.
  - Women 50+ can book their own mammograms at the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP).
3. To increase the number of women planning to attend the OBSP in the Hamilton, Halton, Niagara, Brant and Haldimand-Norfolk regions of Ontario.



## Materials/Resources

Resources helped support the stylists' message to have regular mammograms. They included:

- Salon recruitment brochure outlining four simple ways for stylists to become Breast Friends.
- Copies of *Squeeze*, a glossy, full-colour breast health magazine.
- A "Stylists save lives. Ask me how" workstation mirror decal to prompt conversation.
- Emery boards with the OBSP 1-800 number and the Be a Breast Friend Project website.
- Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) Thingamaboobs for stylists to use with their clients to highlight the effectiveness of regular mammograms.

## Website

Stylists and clients were directed to [www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca) to learn more about the project, to read *Squeeze* magazine online and to complete a survey.

## Reminders & Incentives

A reminder postcard was sent after three months to all salons in the region, encouraging them to take part in the project.

Incentive prizes were offered to salons that encouraged stylists and clients to complete and return surveys.



## Results Summary

During the project, 980 salons received recruitment packages. Of those, 120 salons re-ordered more resources. More than 9,000 copies of *Squeeze* magazine were distributed to salons throughout the region, and more than 5,000 people visited [www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca).

Both stylists and their clients were surveyed during the initial phase of the project.

- Two-thirds of stylists who responded reported speaking to five or more clients per week about breast screening.
- Almost all stylists planned to continue promoting breast cancer screening with their clients.

Clients confirmed that a salon was an appropriate site to talk about breast health. In addition, there was a very positive response to *Squeeze* magazine and to the CCS Thingamaboob as an educational tool.

- 97% reported that *Squeeze* magazine was an informative resource to learn about breast screening and overall breast health.
- 98% felt the Thingamaboob was an informative visual tool to learn about the importance of regular breast screening.
- 49% of eligible clients (aged 50+ who had not already booked a mammogram) planned to book a mammogram at an OBSP site because of the conversation they had with their stylist, and 61% of women felt encouraged to get regular mammograms.
- In one month, 71 women booked an appointment at OBSP as a result of media ads promoting the project in October 2009.

### Project Reach

<b>980</b>	salons received recruitment packages
<b>120</b>	salons requested additional resources
<b>3,111</b>	mirror decals were distributed
<b>22,175</b>	emery boards were distributed
<b>4,451</b>	CCS Thingamaboobs were distributed
<b>5,360</b>	people visited the website
<b>62</b>	stylists completed surveys
<b>661</b>	clients completed surveys
<b>9,006</b>	<i>Squeeze</i> magazines distributed

With continued project promotion post evaluation, more than 15,000 additional magazines have been distributed at sites other than salons, and over 12,000 visits have been made to the website.

## Conclusions

1. The Be A Breast Friend project has increased community capacity by engaging stylists to raise awareness about breast health and the importance of regular breast cancer screening with their clients.
2. Overall, women felt that the salon was an appropriate venue to promote awareness of breast health and were interested in listening to their stylists.
3. Women who visited participating salons reported an increase in their awareness of breast health and their intention to participate in breast cancer screening.
4. Based on their conversation with their stylists, the majority of women planned to pass on the message of breast cancer screening to others.

"I feel if I can help save someone else by raising this topic in my salon, then it is worth it. Prevention is the key, and I feel this program was the best way to reach a lot of people who may not feel comfortable talking to their friends, family or even their doctor."

– Stylist

## Next Steps

The two-year project wraps up in 2010, but stakeholders are optimistic that the key messages will continue to be shared with women if basic supports are available. Supports being offered include:

- Website updates to sustain key messages.
- Media campaign for Breast Health Awareness Month in October 2010.
- Partnerships with local beauty schools.
- Beauty Schools PowerPoint presentation accessible on website.
- Stylists can purchase CCS Thingamaboobs to help promote screening messages.
- Project reproduction or adaptation by other organizations and health units across the province to reach even more women.
- Facebook advertising and fan page.
- Expansion of project to include the idea that anyone can be a breast friend by sharing project messages and spreading the word that mammograms save lives.
- Interested salons can still order more resources while they last.

Anyone interested in becoming a breast friend or promoting the project can consult the website ([www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca)) or contact a project member for more information.

Please quote this citation when using our resources: "Adapted from material produced by the Central West Ontario Be a Breast Friend Project - funded by Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation - Ontario Region."

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