



2.8-MILE WALK ON SAT., JULY 30 IN PORTLAND TO BENEFIT PEOPLE LIVING WITH SCLERODERMA

**6th ANNUAL *STEPPING OUT TO CURE SCLERODERMA*
INVOLVES NATIONAL EFFORT TO RAISE AWARENESS & FUND RESEARCH**

(Portland, OR., June 26, 2011) – Oregon and SW Washington's largest annual scleroderma fundraising and awareness building event, the *Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma* 2.8-Mile benefit walk, is ready rain or shine for Saturday, July 30, 2011 at The Multnomah Arts Center (7688 SW Capitol Hwy.) and Gabriel Park.

Set to begin at 11am, the 6th annual walk benefits the Oregon Chapter of the National Scleroderma Foundation in its efforts to raise awareness, support patients and fund research for this chronic autoimmune disease.

Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma will include food and family activities at The Multnomah Arts Center (the walk-a-thon's start and finish) in addition to the 2-8 mile-walk (shorter loop also available) through lovely southwest side Gabriel Park. Awards will be given for individual and team categories.

Walk-a-thon participants 14 and older pay a registration of \$20 (\$25 day of walk) and are encouraged to recruit fund-raising sponsors to support their walk. A T-shirt will be given to every paid registrant after signing in at the event's registration table, which opens at 10am. Call 503-245-4588 to request an advance registration form and pledge sheet, or simply register online at

<http://www.firstgiving.com/scleroderma-oregon/portland-walk>

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“Scleroderma, also known as systemic sclerosis, is a chronic, often progressive autoimmune disease in which the body’s autoimmune system attacks its own tissues. Four out of five people living with scleroderma are women—and they’re usually stricken in the prime of life,” Oregon Scleroderma Chapter President Liz Orem-Bedel said.

Local people living with this disease have turned to the Oregon Chapter of the Scleroderma Foundation for nearly 30 years in its continuing efforts to provide support groups throughout the state, sponsor educational seminars, and help fund research.

“However, the *Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma* benefit walk is our largest and most visible fund-raising and awareness boosting effort to date. More people are affected by scleroderma everyday, the vast majority of them women, and the Oregon walk-a-thon, part of the nationwide walk-a-thon campaign, is designed to take us to a higher level and really increase our actions in the community,” Orem-Bedel added. “It will be a fun and exciting day, and we encourage everyone to come out to The Multnomah Art Center and Gabriel Park on Saturday, July 30. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities, too.”

Although medicines can sometimes help treat symptoms, there is no cure yet for scleroderma, which literally means “hard skin,” and can cause thickening and tightening of the skin, as well as serious damage to internal organs. The effects of scleroderma range from mild to fatal. To date, there is no known cause or cure.

Dozens of *Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma* walks take place annually around the country supporting the Scleroderma Foundation. The money raised in Oregon will help support the patients and families in the region, increase public awareness, and funding for the many people in our area and across the country living with scleroderma.

For more information, contact Liz Orem-Bedel at 503-245-4588, e-mail at sdforegon@comcast.net, or visit the Web site at www.scleroderma.org/chapter/oregon

For more information, visit www.scleroderma.org/chapter/oregon/ or contact the Scleroderma Foundation Chapter at 503-245-4588, SDForegon@comcast.net, PO Box 19296, Portland, OR 97280. The Scleroderma Foundation is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization serving the interests of persons living with scleroderma. The Foundation’s 24 chapters and 147 support groups nationwide help to carry out its three-fold mission of support, education, and research. The Scleroderma Foundation is the leading nonprofit supporter of scleroderma research—funding over \$1M of new grants each year to find the cause and cure of scleroderma.