

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**DATE** September 25, 2006

**CONTACT** General Inquiries: Kerry Parker, 1-877-WDS-ROSE (937-7673)

Media Inquiries: Nancy FitzGerald (760) 333-9296

## **TEXAS DERMATOLOGISTS TEAM UP AT THE BIGGEST FAMILY EVENT IN CENTRAL STATE TO PROMOTE FAMILY SUN SAFETY**

***Austin Mayor Will Wynn declares September 30 as "Families Play Safe in the Sun Day" in recognition of the Women's Dermatologic Society's award-winning community outreach service coming to the Old Pecan St. Fall Arts Festival***

(September 25, 2006—Austin, TX)—In a state where sun safety education is now recognized as part of standardized Texas Essential Skills and Knowledge, Texas dermatologists representing the Women's Dermatologic Society (WDS) will bring the message of sun protection and skin cancer prevention to an expected crowd of 300,000 local families at the upcoming Old Pecan Street Fall Arts Festival in Austin, TX, September 30 and October 1, 2006. Throughout the weekend, the WDS volunteer team of Greater Austin-area dermatologists will offer free skin cancer screenings, Dermascan assessments, educational materials, sunscreen giveaways and children's activities such as UV Meter readings, a sun safety quiz and national coloring contest.

Women's Dermatologic Society~[www.womensderm.org](http://www.womensderm.org)

## **Page 2 of 6**

The dynamic sun safety educational exhibit, which is designed to help parents and children understand how to lead the sun-safe life, will provide services and materials free to the public from 11 am-7 pm on Saturday, September 30 and Sunday, October 1.

Parents and educators will also have the opportunity to learn more about the WDS "Adopt-A-School" program, which offers the Environmental Protection Agency's "SunWise" School Program with the option of a local WDS dermatologist who could volunteer to augment the sun safety curriculum in the classroom and in after-school programs.

Austin marks the ninth leg of the acclaimed 15-city, three-year tour of the Women's Dermatologic Society's national campaign, **"Families Play Safe in the Sun"**, which is made possible through a \$1,000,000 grant from the 3M Foundation. This educational community outreach promotes sun safety for families and youth. WDS members to co-host the event are **Toni Funicella**, (Austin, TX) and **Lisa Garner**, MD (Garland, TX), both Board-certified private practice dermatologists.

Women's Dermatologic Society~[www.womensderm.org](http://www.womensderm.org)

## Page 3 of 6

The “**Families Play Safe in the Sun**” campaign has an important message for Central Texas families, given the fact that cumulative overexposure to the sun is the primary cause of skin cancer, requiring that good skin habits are developed at an early age and practiced daily throughout the lifetime on a year-round basis.

In recognition of the local WDS members’ volunteer outreach, Austin Mayor **Will Wynn** will declare Saturday, September 30 as “**Families Play Safe in the Sun Day**” to help bring attention to the importance of sun safety education and skin cancer prevention.

The “**Families Play Safe in the Sun**” campaign is presented to the public at a time when:

- ✓ Skin cancer ranks as the most common form of cancer in America, with 1.3 million new diagnoses expected in 2006.
- ✓ Skin cancer is the leading type of cancer among young women, ages 25-29, and rates are increasing among 18-29 year olds.
- ✓ One in 5 Americans and one in 3 Caucasians will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime.

## Page 4 of 6

If caught in its earliest stages, melanoma, the most severe form of skin cancer, is highly treatable; if left undetected, it can be fatal.

Because overexposure to the sun is the primary and most preventable cause of skin cancer, people of all ages and skin types need to make the daily commitment to safeguard their health. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends:

- (1) Regular visits to your dermatologist;
- (2) Liberal application of a high SPF, broad-spectrum UVA/UVB sunscreen to all exposed areas of the body and face, with re-application every two hours;
- (3) Wearing sun-protective clothing, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses;
- (4) Sun avoidance during peak hours.

As part of the **WDS** sun safety recommendations geared for families, people are reminded to:

- ✓ Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outdoors;
- ✓ Check expiration dates of sunscreen to ensure product effectiveness;
- ✓ Remember that the sun's rays can be harmful even under cloudy skies and cooler temperatures;

## Page 5 of 6

- ✓ Use extra precautions with sun exposure on the water and in higher altitudes, which can significantly increase harmful UV exposure.

According to **Suzanne Connolly, MD**, Associate Professor of Dermatology, Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, who leads the national WDS community service effort, the mission of ***Families Play Safe in the Sun*** is to “educate, encourage, and empower people of all ages to make sun safety a way of life, and practice proper skin health habits on a daily basis.” The WDS campaign draws from its 1,200 members nationwide to provide volunteer support in local communities to reach out to diverse populations to heighten sun safety awareness and healthy practices. The **Women’s Dermatologic Society** recently earned the prestigious Gold Triangle Award from the American Academy of Dermatology for its **“Families Play Safe in the Sun”** campaign.

In addition to generous funding from the 3M Foundation, product donations will be provided by Coolibar; Del-Ray Dermatologicals; Dermatologic Cosmetic Laboratories; Ortho Neutrogena; Procter & Gamble; Schering-Plough; Skyrad; and Starberry, Ltd. DermaScans

**Page 6 of 6**

will be furnished by Schering-Plough.

**WHO: Volunteer dermatologist members of the Women's Dermatologic Society from the Greater Austin area, led by Lisa Garner, MD and Toni Funicella, MD**

**WHAT: "Families Play Safe in the Sun" community service outreach at the Old Pecan St. Fall Arts Festival, providing free skin cancer screenings, dermatologic assessments, children's activities, sun safety educational materials and sunscreen—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**WHERE: 6<sup>th</sup> Street- Old Pecan Street Fall Arts Festival, Austin, TX.**

**WHEN: Saturday, September 30 and Sunday, October 1, 11 am-7 pm.**

**INFORMATION: 1-877-WDS-ROSE (937-7673). Visit: [www.womensderm.org](http://www.womensderm.org) or [www.playsafeinthesun.org](http://www.playsafeinthesun.org)**

*The Women's Dermatologic Society supports the careers and professional development of women dermatologists. The mission of the Women's Dermatologic Society is to help women in dermatology achieve their greatest personal and professional potential by striving to: foster, promote, and support women's issues in dermatology; identify, train, and recognize women leaders in dermatology; and provide a forum for developing relationships.*