



Empower Women
CHANGE OUR WORLD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dana Waisberg | Jessica Herling
BNC | Bragman Nyman Cafarelli
dwaisberg@bncpr.com | jherling@bncpr.com
212.253.4646

**BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA RESIDENT WINS CASH AWARD TO FUND PROGRAM
ENCOURAGING YOUNG WOMEN'S AWARENESS OF CAREERS IN COMPUTING**
Suzanne Menzel Honored with \$5,000 Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund Award

(New York, NY, December 4, 2007) – Bloomington, Indiana resident Suzanne Menzel is committed to improving the lives of women and their families in her community. Suzanne was named this week's winner of the *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund*, a weekly \$5,000 cash award program from Avon Products, Inc. to support individuals in their work to empower women. Suzanne will apply her award towards "Bring IT On!", an initiative designed to expand the reach of the successful *Just Be* program, which provides outreach, mentoring and guidance to encourage K-12 girls to pursue careers in computing and Information Technology (IT).

According to statistics from the Computer Research Association, women earned only 15% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in computer science and engineering in 2005, down from an already low 17% in 2004. Suzanne, a senior lecturer in computer science at Indiana University, attributes this startling unbalance to "the prevailing stereotype of the anti-social computer geek." The "uncool" perception associated with these disciplines – which can lead to lucrative and rewarding careers in a growing field – can be particularly powerful during girls' formative K-12 school years, a time in which many are especially concerned about how they are perceived by their peers.

Through her extensive involvement in efforts to mentor and support women in computing, Suzanne set out to counter these detrimental attitudes and championed the efforts of the Women in Computing (WIC) group of Indiana University to create *Just Be* – a K-12 outreach road show that highlights the benefits of IT careers. In 2006, Indiana University students presented *Just Be* to 900 children and 250 college students in southern Indiana communities. This successful initiative had a positive impact on its target geographic area, and Suzanne realized that simultaneous efforts of many schools could achieve a sustained change in attitudes on a national level.

To help reach a broader audience, in 2006 Suzanne and WIC members introduced "Bring IT On!", a major dissemination effort to educate other college students about the benefits of programs such as *Just Be*. "Bring IT On!" offers workshops and materials to students at universities, equipping them to create outreach programs similar to *Just Be* in their area's local schools. This expansion will spread the important message about careers in computing and IT, and open young women's interest in exploring opportunities for successful futures in these burgeoning fields. Suzanne believes that greater nationwide participation will lead to a significant change in attitudes, and ultimately increase women's participation in computer and IT fields.

-more-

Critical to achieving the maximum effectiveness of the program and propelling its future success is communication among schools, including sharing challenges and successes to strengthen the program. With her *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund* award, Suzanne will implement a summit meeting for the 2007 Bring IT On! participants, thereby enabling them to learn from one another's progress and challenges to build stronger and even more successful future programs. The award money will be used towards subsidizing the costs of travel, meals, supplies, facility rental, and work-study programming. Thanks to the *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund* and the programming of Bring IT On! and *Just Be*, Suzanne will be able to help educate more young women and dispel the negative myths surrounding computing, allowing them to consider an important career option.

Suzanne's winning application to the *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund* fell under the category of "Community Service," one of three areas the Fund supports. Her proposal met the criteria to clearly present unique and achievable objectives to empower women or girls and ultimately improve society. It was selected from a pool of strong contenders by an expert panel of judges, including Suze Orman, America's most recognized expert on personal finance. "This strategy of expanding a program through training "trainers" seems timely," noted UNIFEM Public Affairs Specialist Joan Libby-Hawk – the most recent appointee to the Fund's judging panel – of Suzanne's application.

About the *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund*

The *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund* will announce and award \$5,000 each week for a year through April 2008 to a deserving U.S. individual who has submitted a compelling application to help realize a program, project or idea to empower women in one of three areas: business development, community service, or awareness and outreach. Suzanne is one of thirteen weekly winners to be selected from more than 1200 applicants from across the U.S. who applied for an *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund* in the third of four quarterly application cycles. Local *Hello Tomorrow Fund* programs have also been created by Avon in 18 other countries worldwide.

"The *Hello Tomorrow Fund* is the latest realization of Avon's profound commitment to empowering women around the world," said Andrea Jung, Chairman and CEO of Avon Products, Inc., which created the *Fund*. "Given the resources, women can impact their lives, families and communities in meaningful ways. Women can change our world. It is in this spirit that we have created the *Hello Tomorrow Fund*, and I am especially gratified that the *Hello Tomorrow Fund* is also launching in various forms in countries around the globe. Avon understands women, and we also understand the power of the individual to effect significant change."

Women and men are eligible to apply for the US *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund*, and deserving individual are selected from the pool of applicants by an expert panel of judges. Winning programs must present unique and achievable initiatives to empower women or girls and ultimately improve society in one of three areas:

- **Business Development:** A for-profit business that directly empowers women through its mission, product or service, or through the means of doing business.
- **Community Service:** A non-profit project or program that helps women of any age realize their full potential or overcome obstacles.
- **Awareness & Outreach:** Educate others about an issue that affects women to inspire and empower other women and have a positive impact on the issue.

Hello Tomorrow Fund applications will be accepted through December 19, 2007 and winners will be announced each week through April 2008. Application submission and selection of winners are organized in a quarterly cycle. One winner will be publicly announced every Tuesday, and winners' profiles will be featured on the website to further share their inspiring ideas. To further support women's empowerment, the website also offers links to resources and organizations in the areas of the awards – business development, community service and awareness and outreach – as well as general women's issue. This service provides information to all persons interested in these issues regardless of participation in the *Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund*.

The fastest way to apply or learn more is at www.avon.com/hellotomorrowfund. For those without internet access, a friend or colleague can download a printable PDF file of the application on the website. Hard copies of the application may be requested by writing to: Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund, c/o Changing Our World, 220 East 42nd Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

About the Judges

Applications are thoughtfully and carefully reviewed by an expert panel comprised of notable public figures, philanthropic leaders and heads of business, including:

- **Jillian Dempsey**: influential makeup artist, beauty industry icon and entrepreneur
- **Anne T. Dowling**: President of the Institute for Cultural Enterprise (ICE), a nonprofit agency; past President of the Texaco Foundation and Director of Corporate Contributions for Altria
- **Carol M. Kurzig**: Executive Director of the Avon Foundation
- **Joan LaRovere, M.D.**: Associate Director of the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit at The Royal Brompton Hospital in London and co-founder and Vice President of the Virtue Foundation
- **Joan Libby-Hawk**: human rights advocate and Public Affairs Specialist, United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM
- **Suze Orman**: personal finance expert, Emmy Award-winning television host, author, magazine and online columnist, writer/producer, and motivational speaker. Suze's new book, *Women & Money: Owning the Power to Control Your Destiny*, was just released February 27.
- **Maria Peninger**: Vice President of Representative Development for Avon Products, Inc. and strong advocate for women's empowerment
- **Cynthia Rowley**: award-winning fashion designer, author and entrepreneur
- **Joseph Salim, D.D.M.**: committed humanitarian, co-founder and Executive Director of the Virtue Foundation
- **Lynn M. Stekas**: nationally-recognized leader in corporate community involvement, philanthropy and volunteerism, and former President of the MONY Foundation

About Avon Products, Inc.

Avon, *the* company for women, is a leading global beauty company, with over \$8 billion in annual revenue. As the world's largest direct seller, Avon markets to women in well over 100 countries through over five million independent Avon Sales Representatives. Avon's product line includes beauty products, fashion jewelry and apparel, and features such well-recognized brand names as Avon Color, Anew, Skin-So-Soft, Avon Solutions, Advance Techniques, Avon Naturals, Mark, and Avon Wellness. Avon is also a leader in corporate responsibility and philanthropy. In addition to a heritage of women's empowerment, Avon and the Avon Foundation have robust programs worldwide to raise funds and awareness for breast cancer, domestic violence and emergency disaster relief. Learn more about Avon, its products and programs at www.avoncompany.com.

###