

# The Giving Season

FFANY Shoes on Sale



Guests at the 2014 gala in New York

QVC Presents “FFANY Shoes on Sale” has harnessed the power of pink for 22 years, marrying great shopping and a deserving cause. Now, the footwear industry’s pinnacle charitable event is on track to surpass \$50 million in donations for breast cancer research and education.

By **Jocelyn Anderson**

**E**very two minutes, a woman in the U.S. is diagnosed with breast cancer. While frightening, that statistic, from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, increasingly signifies a new story of hope. In the years since FFANY’s annual fundraiser began, scientists have developed a better understanding of breast cancer, resulting in more successful treatments and fewer deaths. And the QVC Presents “FFANY Shoes on Sale” event has played a significant part in the progress that’s been made.

PHOTO: JOHN AQUINO



What started as a small gathering in a tent in Central Park has grown into a major fundraiser for the cause, now offering more than 85,000 pairs of shoes from 80-plus brands at a gala tonight in New York and during a three-hour QVC telethon on Oct. 22. More Shoes on Sale footwear is sold on QVC.com throughout the month.

The event raises critical research dollars for nine cancer centers.

The Breast Cancer Research Foundation has received nearly \$4 million since 2003, which enables it to fund researchers at top institutions across the globe.

“We give grants that are typically \$250,000, so that means 16 research projects over the years have been moved forward with the thoughtful support of FFANY and QVC,” said Myra Biblowit, CEO of the BCRF.

Rachel Hazan, professor of pathology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York, is one of the researchers funded by the BCRF. She focuses on metastasis — cancer’s ability to spread throughout the body — and the role of a molecule called p21 in fueling cancer renewal.

“We found that this molecule is making the cancer cell not so receptive to [treatment], and by understanding how it does that, we can overcome that resistance and make the drug more effective,” she said.

Another beneficiary, the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania, has used the money it has received since 2001 to fund a tumor and blood bank with tissue from more than 2,000 patients. With this resource, said Angela DeMichele, co-leader of the breast cancer program at the Abramson Cancer Center, physicians are able to look at similar cases, draw comparisons and sometimes determine treatment.

DeMichele is now working on the problem of breast cancer recurrence. Certain cancer cells, she said, evade initial treatments and remain dormant before returning — sometimes decades later.

“That’s the thing that these funds are helping us do that are transformational in our field,” said DeMichele. “Obviously, we have a lot of work to do, but in the last two to three years, we have dedicated a lot of these funds to this. We are starting clinical trials and are ready to start doing the tests. It’s going to be an

“We still have a lot of work to do, but in the last two to three years, we have dedicated a lot of these funds to [research on recurrence].”

Angela DeMichele, Abramson Cancer Center



A decorative shoe sculpture at the 2014 event

### THE BENEFICIARIES

This year’s Shoes on Sale gala and QVC broadcast will raise funds for nine research groups. Meet the leaders of three of them.



Peter Emanuel, director, Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



Myra Biblowit, CEO, Breast Cancer Research Foundation



Angela DeMichele, co-leader, Breast Cancer Research Program, Abramson Cancer Center

PHOTOS: SHOE SCULPTURE: JOHN AQUINO; HEADSHOTS: COURTESY OF ORGANIZATIONS

FFANY Shoes on Sale

# Here's to FFANY's heart and sole.

We proudly celebrate  
QVC Presents "FFANY Shoes on Sale"  
on October 22. Let's continue to fight  
breast cancer—one step at a time.



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exciting time."

Peter Emanuel, director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, told *Footwear News* that clinical trials recently started on a breast cancer vaccine. While it's still in the early stages, he explained, the vaccine has shown some benefit for women with metastatic breast cancer.

## Industry Commitment

On the footwear side, Diane Sullivan, chairman, CEO and president of Caleres, sits on the board of BJC HealthCare in St. Louis, home of the Siteman Cancer Center, another beneficiary. In her dual role, Sullivan said she's proud to contribute.

"We have employees who are survivors. They were treated at Siteman, so this event is very personal to us," she said. "Over the last 11 years, we've donated more than \$7.3 million to this wonderful cause."

Ron Fromm, president and CEO of FFANY, pointed out that Shoes on Sale, the organization's largest endeavor, always enjoys unwavering support from all corners of the footwear business.

"Since [Shoes on Sale started], it has resonated tremendously with the shoe industry," he said. "It has evolved into being a tool

to help build awareness. There is something special about the Shoes on Sale event."

This year, four companies have signed on as Shoes on Sale's top "pink" benefactors: Caleres, Nine West Group, Camuto Group and Marc Fisher Footwear.

Marc Fisher increased its involvement last year, in recognition of Shoes on Sale co-founder Jodi Fisher.

"Jodi, Marc's sister, always reminded us about the importance of our actions and what doing good means for others," said Susan Itzkowitz, president of Marc Fisher Footwear. "Jodi inspires us to continue her legacy."

## Coming Together

The festivities start tonight at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, where attendees will enjoy gala mainstays like the designer shoe salon and awards ceremony.

The salon, where guests can snag discounted pairs of luxe styles, will continue to be a draw, said event organizers, who have received donations of covetable shoes from top labels, including Giuseppe Zanotti, Stuart Weitzman, Jimmy Choo, Gucci, Diane von Furstenberg, Michael Kors and Salvatore Ferragamo.

The awards ceremony, hosted by "Dancing with the Stars" alum



Gianvito Rossi,  
Nina Garcia and  
Ron Fromm at  
last year's event



“Over the last 11 years, [Caleres has] donated more than \$7.3 million to this wonderful cause.”

Caleres CEO Diane Sullivan



and 2015 event spokeswoman Cheryl Burke, will honor footwear business leaders who have made an impact in the industry and in the fight against breast cancer.

Chalhoub Group, a major player in luxury footwear in the Middle East for 60 years, will receive FFANY's Retailer of the Year award.

The FFANY Jodi Fisher Humanitarian Award will go to Vince Camuto in a posthumous gesture for his unflagging support of the cause. “I'm sure that will be well-received and heartfelt for so many in the room who know of Vince's commitment to the industry,” said Fromm.

The night will also offer video interludes highlighting the work of the beneficiaries as well as personal stories from breast cancer survivors. Notably, comedian Wanda Sykes has recorded a message about her own experience with a Stage Zero diagnosis in 2011.

Actress Courteney Cox, a long-time supporter of the John Wayne Cancer Institute at Providence St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, Calif., is also set to make an appearance via video.

What more could Shoes on Sale need? Its own theme song, of course. This year, FFANY commissioned an original composition by Paul Reuter, executive director of the Sheldon Concert Hall & Art Galleries in St. Louis. The song will be performed at the gala by two-time Grammy Award winner and breast cancer survivor Sylvia McNair.

“Out of the generosity of their hearts, Paul and Sylvia and the team have

generously donated the rights to this song, which will allow us to use it wherever, whenever for the benefit of FFANY Shoes on Sale and breast cancer awareness,” said Fromm. “We think it will pay big dividends for a long time.”

Also new: Club FFANY, the event's after-party, will move to the stage of the ballroom, allowing additional shopping time in the designer shoe salon.

Even more shoes will be sold during QVC's telethon on Oct. 22, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (ET), with a new studio designed especially for the event. Made to look like a New York loft, the set will also be bigger than ever.

“We've found with the range of products we sell, we've got to move quickly, so there will be a lot of room to display the product. It will be different for the viewer,” said Mike George, CEO and president of QVC, which has been a Shoes on Sale partner for 21 of its 22 years.

George recalled meeting many of the beneficiary hospitals and researchers over the years. And while the science behind the disease can sometimes be difficult to understand, he said, the experience is always energizing.

“They always thank me, and I pause and say, ‘I've got the easy part of the job here,’” said George. “What they are doing is quite extraordinary.”

**FFANY** Shoes on Sale



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