

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, July 14, 2013

Contact: Lincoln Medical Center Public Affairs - 718-579-5777

Nydia.negron-rios@nychhc.org; renelda.walker@nychhc.org

**LINCOLN MEDICAL CENTER AND PREGONES THEATER PROUDLY PRESENT
BRONX PREMIERE OF "FROM BREAST CANCER TO BROADWAY"**

*Heartrending Stories Written by Breast Cancer Survivors
And Performed by Local Actors Recount Brave Tales of Hope and Courage*

Bronx, N.Y. - Lincoln Medical Center's Art Exchange Program is proud to join Pregones Theater today for the Bronx premiere presentation of the acclaimed "*From Breast Cancer to Broadway*"-- a series of short plays written by breast cancer survivors. Performed by Pregones Theater Ensemble, under the artistic direction of award-winning actress Elise Hernandez, vignette performances include stories about four Lincoln Medical Center cancer survivors. The purpose of staging their personal tales is to empower, inspire and motivate audiences to be more proactive about breast cancer. The admission-free show is partly funded by The Greater New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Through this theatrical venture, these survivor-turned-playwrights have become the face of survival in their communities.

"Breast cancer continues to be one of the leading causes of death among women," said Milton Nuñez, Lincoln Medical Center Executive Director. "Bringing to the stage the voices of breast cancer survivors is a lesson of triumph over adversity and a celebration of life. I extend my congratulations to playwright Bridget A. Wimberly for creating the *From Breast Cancer to Broadway* project, and to our patients who have displayed incredible courage by telling their personal stories."

Rosalba Rolon, Pregones Artistic Director, noted: "Pregones Theater is proud to partner with Lincoln Medical Center on this project, lending a platform for cancer survivors' voices to be heard on our stage."

"Working with Lincoln Medical Center's cancer survivors as they bravely put their lives on paper for everyone to understand the suffering of breast cancer and the victory of survival was a unique experience," said Bridgette A. Wimberly, playwright and director of *From Breast Cancer to Broadway*. "The support provided by the Art Exchange Program was invaluable."

Sharona Ponder, cancer survivor at Lincoln Medical Center said, "It is an honor to share my story. My prayer is that those who hear my story will feel hope and strength. I know that those battling cancer may want to give up but, take it from me, the fight is worth it."

About From Breast Cancer to Broadway

Playwright Bridgette A. Wimberly started the program after her sister Bernadette Scruggs started telling the stories she heard in her breast cancer support group. Bridgette believed everyone should hear their heartrending anecdotes and began teaching survivors how to turn their stories into short plays. Five years later, they had presented the work of 26 survivors

performed or directed by over 75 artists including Ruby Dee, Lynn Whitfield, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Chuck Cooper, Roslyn Ruff, George Faison, Billie Allen and Leah Gardiner.

In 2010, eleven Cleveland survivor-turned-playwrights had their play produced in a four-week run at Cleveland's Karamu House Theatre to rave reviews. These new playwrights traveled to New York in June 2012 to have their plays presented at the Cherry Lane Theatre by award winning actors. In October 2012, Bridgette Wimberly joined the Lincoln Art Exchange and, over the course of several months, met with breast cancer survivors, helping them write their own stories.

About Lincoln Medical Center's Award-Winning Cancer Center

The Breast Center, an integral component of the Cancer Center, was the first site in New York City to receive accreditation by the American College of Surgeons National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers in 2009, recognizing Lincoln as a Center of Excellence for Breast Cancer. The Cancer Center's clinical and support services offered to patients include, but are not limited to, chemotherapy and biotherapy infusions, in-patient and out-patient consultations, screening, patient and family education, support groups and community-based prevention and detection programs under the For You, For Life, Viva Mujer and Viva Los Hombres programs. Lincoln's Cancer Center is the recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Achievement Award by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer; and Lincoln is a designated American College of Radiology Breast Imaging Center of Excellence.

About the Lincoln Art Exchange

The Lincoln Art Exchange (LAX) program offers affordable healthcare for all uninsured NYC-based artists and arts workers, and offers them a unique option of exchanging creative services for medical care at Lincoln. Lincoln realizes that artists and performers possess special talents that can lift spirits and bring hope to patients. Through LAX, artists pay for their medical care at Lincoln using credits earned by providing an artistic service at the hospital. One hour of service merits 40 credits or \$40 worth of healthcare at Lincoln. Eligible artists can exchange creative services for doctor visits, hospitalization, emergency care, medical and surgical procedures, prescription drugs, diagnostic tests and screenings. If you are an artist and would like to enroll in LAX, visit us at www.nyc.gov/hhc/lincolnartexchange, email LincolnArtExchange@nychhc.org or call 1-855-LIN-ARTS (546-2787) to learn more. From Breast Cancer to Broadway is brought to you through the Lincoln Art Exchange.

About Lincoln Medical Center

Lincoln Medical Center, located at 234 East 149th Street in The Bronx, is a 347-bed acute care, level 1 trauma center with the busiest single site Emergency Department in the region. Winner of the 2012 American Hospital Association-McKesson Quest for Quality Finalist Award for Innovation in Quality Improvement and Safety, the hospital emphasizes primary care and specialty medicine and utilizes the latest advances in medical science. Lincoln Medical Center is a member of the Generations+/Northern Manhattan Health Network, a healthcare conglomerate which is part of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

About HHC

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is a \$6.7 billion integrated healthcare delivery system with its own 430,000 member health plan, MetroPlus, and is the largest municipal healthcare organization in the country. HHC serves 1.4 million New Yorkers every year and more than 475,000 are uninsured. HHC provides medical, mental health and substance abuse services through its 11 acute care hospitals, four skilled nursing facilities, six large diagnostic and treatment centers and more than 70 community based clinics. HHC Health and Home Care also provides in-home services for New Yorkers. HHC is the recipient of the National Quality Forum and The Joint Commission's John M. Eisenberg Award for Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/hhc

###