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CONTACT: Darlene Yblood (214)706-1649 [darlene.yblood@heart.org](mailto:darlene.yblood@heart.org)  
Suzanne Grant (214)706-1467 [suzanne.grant@heart.org](mailto:suzanne.grant@heart.org)

## **Retired dietitian finds motivation in Choose To Move program**

DALLAS, January 7, 2002 -- Joanne Samaraf is a retired dietitian who, frankly, is a little embarrassed. "I know what I need to be doing, and I know the health risks if I don't," commented Joanne, scolding herself. "I should be setting the example!"

Several years ago, Joanne, 66, wanted to lose a few pounds from her petite 5-foot-tall frame. However, after retirement she comfortably settled into a less active lifestyle that also included consuming more calories. "I like to cook," she explained, "and I've been doing more cooking since I retired." The social aspect of food has also proven to be a challenge for Joanne. "My husband and I eat out more now; that is our way to socialize," she added, confirming a common challenge for many people, regardless of age.

As a result Joanne added another few pounds, rather than losing the weight she'd intended to lose. She needed motivation, and quickly found it through the American Heart Association's FREE physical activity program, **Choose to Move**. By participating, she received a program book filled with tips and tools to help achieve her fitness goals. She concludes that the materials – a weekly activity schedule; weekly at-a-glance topics; news about women and heart disease, and recipes to try – have been critical to her sticking with the program.

**Choose To Move**, sponsored by Bayer Aspirin, maker of Bayer Women's Aspirin Plus Calcium, is the American Heart Association's FREE 12-week physical activity program created especially for busy women. **Choose To Move** helps women recognize small, manageable changes that they can easily fit into their lifestyle and individual schedules. No gym membership or expensive equipment is required. Through the program, women learn how to increase their physical activity and how to make wise nutrition choices without adding to their daily stress.

"Motivation was lacking for me," explained Joanne. "The Choose To Move program provided that. Periodic reminders and positive comments and 'congratulations' really helped me, as did the many suggestions." The goal of the **Choose To Move** program is to encourage all women to be physically active for at least thirty minutes most days of the week. Joanne has done just that.

Joanne, accompanied by husband John, walks at a nearby mall about five days per week. Her severe allergies prevent her from outdoor walking, so a local shopping mall provided a no-cost location for exercise. Joanne had been swimming at a local recreation center but was forced to quit due to recurring ear infections. Instead, she takes a water aerobics class three times per week. Often she and John take another walk in the evening after dinner. Joanne also began a weight training sessions.

The results for Joanne have been encouraging, though not specifically in watching numbers on the scale drop. “I definitely feel better and my muscles are firmer. If I don’t exercise, I lose my strength, too. I’m at an age when that can become a problem,” she explained. “I know that I just need to keep moving and to eat smaller amounts. It’s important to always eat breakfast and then two more meals each day,” she added.

Because of Joanne’s diligence, she participates in **Choose To Move** at the advanced “Trailblazer” level, meaning she is physically active five or more times a week for more than six months. Women at all physical fitness levels are invited to enroll. Beginners, who for the most part may be sedentary, can enter at the introductory ‘Mover’ level. Women who are a little more physically active join the program at the intermediate “Strider” level. Then follows the “Trailblazer” level. After completing one 12-week phase and a self-evaluation, participants can continue in the program and move up to the next level. For Joanne, that means continuing at the “Trailblazer” level in order to continue receiving the motivation and encouragement which has proven so successful to her.

Women are invited to sign up to participate in this self-administered fitness program by calling **1-888-MY HEART** or registering on-line by logging on to [www.choosetomove.org](http://www.choosetomove.org).

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#### About the American Heart Association:

The American Heart Association spent about \$382 million during fiscal year 2000-2001 on research support, public and professional education, and community programs. Nationwide, the organization has grown to include more than 22.5 million volunteers and supporters who carry out its mission in communities across the country. The association is the largest nonprofit voluntary health organization fighting heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, which annually kill about 960,000 Americans. For more information about heart disease and stroke, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit our Web site at [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org).

#### About Bayer Aspirin:

The American Heart Association supports the use of aspirin along with a regimen of diet, exercise and smoking cessation to reduce the risk of recurrent heart attack and stroke. Bayer Aspirin maker of the new Bayer Women's Aspirin Plus Calcium is proud to sponsor the American Heart Association’s Choose To Move physical activity program for women.