

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CATHOLIC MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY FROM THE BOARD OF KOMEN
ACADIANA

You may have heard that the Catholic Diocese in Lafayette has advised its members not to support the Acadiana Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Race for the Cure due to a belief that Komen supports Planned Parenthood. We want to address this rumor and make sure that our community and supporters have the correct information. First and foremost, Komen Acadiana has never granted funds to Planned Parenthood. Second, no funds sent to the Komen national research grant program have ever been granted to Planned Parenthood. Catholics in the Acadiana community can be absolutely certain that no funds raised by Komen Acadiana go to Planned Parenthood.

Earlier this year, our board members were told that teachers at Catholic schools had been advised by the Diocese not to have any involvement with Komen or its events because of a rumored connection between Komen Acadiana and Planned Parenthood. Upon receiving this information, we sent a letter to Bishop Jarrell asking him to reconsider his position as the basis for that position was in error. The Bishop responded by inviting a representative of Komen Acadiana to meet with the Director of Pro-Life Issues at the Diocese, Karol Meynard. At that meeting we provided Ms. Meynard an explanation of our local affiliates' mission and proof of our grant history to dispute any connection between Komen Acadiana and Planned Parenthood.

On November 2, 2010, we received a letter of response from Bishop Jarrell. In the letter, the Bishop acknowledged that Komen Acadiana does not give money to Planned Parenthood and also indicated that any connection between Komen and Planned Parenthood is quite remote and therefore support of our organization by local community members is "morally permissible." The letter states that the Diocese has not made "any negative judgments about persons working with Komen Acadiana or about individuals who wish to participate in its activities." Unfortunately, the Bishop decided not to reconsider his prior position that Catholic schools and organizations should not have an official association with Komen Acadiana.

While we are disappointed in Bishop Jarrell's conclusion, we will respect his decision and will not actively recruit Catholic schools and organizations to formally support our Race. We maintain that the Bishop's conclusion is based upon erroneous information, but we understand his desire to avoid what could be perceived by some as controversy. We would like to emphasize, however, that there is absolutely no reason for any member of our community, whether Catholic or not, to avoid supporting our Race based upon any issue relating to Planned Parenthood. Komen Acadiana has never granted money to Planned Parenthood for any cause. We welcome public scrutiny of our grant history, and will gladly share our records with anyone who is interested to know how we use our funds. We are proud of our grantees; we are proud of the work that they and we do in our community. We save lives, we help women and men who are battling breast cancer, we support and honor our survivors, and we educate young people so that fewer lives will be lost to this disease. That is who we are, and we will never hide where our money goes.

If you are Catholic and wish to support the Komen Acadiana Race for the Cure, you should not hesitate to do so. The Bishop made clear, in his letter and in conversations between his office and ours, that the Diocese does not make any negative judgments about persons supporting Komen Acadiana. If you have children who attend a Catholic school, they too may feel free to support and participate in our Race. While there may not be an official school team for the Race, parents may form a family and friends team, register as a family or simply register as individuals.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We are always happy to discuss where our money goes. And please know that not a single penny of any funds raised by Komen Acadiana has ever gone to a Planned Parenthood organization.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors of the Acadiana Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure