



THE RED DRESS IS THE NATIONAL SYMBOL FOR WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE AWARENESS

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The Red Dress: Introduced in 2003

The Heart Truth is a national awareness campaign on women and heart disease sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). *The Heart Truth* first introduced the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness during American Heart Month at Fashion Week in February 2003.

Seeking to mobilize an industry intrinsically tied to female audiences to help launch the new symbol, *The Heart Truth* forged a groundbreaking collaboration between the Federal government and the fashion industry. As a result of this partnership, women and heart disease was the chosen cause for Fashion Week during American Heart Month in February 2003. To demonstrate their support, 19 top fashion designers—from Vera Wang to Donna Karan to Oscar de la Renta—contributed red dresses to *The Heart Truth* for a stunning display under the tents at Fashion Week. First Lady Laura Bush, wearing a Red Dress pin, conducted a national media tour to officially unveil *The Heart Truth's* new national symbol.

Since its introduction in 2003, women around the country have rallied around the Red Dress and are celebrating the cause and taking ownership of the symbol. They are commissioning traveling exhibitions of its red dresses, around which they're creating diverse celebrations of women's heart health, such as health fairs, galas, dances, celebrity teas, power breakfasts, and real women Red Dress fashion shows.

The Red Dress Collection 2004

This year at Olympus Fashion Week 2004, *The Heart Truth* returned to center stage to debut its Red Dress Collection 2004. On Friday, February 6, opening day of Olympus Fashion Week, fashion industry leaders—including top designers, models and celebrities—united on one runway to debut a new collection of 26 red dresses created exclusively for *The Heart Truth* campaign to raise awareness about heart disease, the #1 killer of women.

As part of *The Heart Truth's* February 2004 programming, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that declared February American Heart Month and designated Friday, February 6 as the first-ever National Wear Red Day. In concert with this announcement, the newly-designed official Red Dress pin and icon logo was also unveiled. The new pin is available for \$2.50 at www.hearttruth.gov.

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Why a Red Dress?

The Red Dress as a national symbol for women and heart disease awareness was designed to build awareness that women are at risk; give a sense of hope that women can reduce their risk, and empower them to do so; and provide a clear call to action coupled with a sense of urgency.

As an icon, the Red Dress tested well with women across the country who cited its ability to get attention, convey the seriousness of heart disease, and change the perception that it is only a man's issue.

What the Public is Saying about the Red Dress?

The NHLBI has received numerous comments in support of the Red Dress. Here are just a few:

"The Red Dress is Short, Sassy & Sweet!! I'm a 52-year-old woman who had a heart attack 9 months ago; now after 4 stents & 4 trips to the hospital, I can't wait for something to wear for people to ask me about. I have heart disease and now feel I should have never had the first heart attack IF doctors had checked me earlier in life. It's like the pink ribbon for breast cancer, people will know what you are wearing & why."

"I feel blessed to be alive. I remembered Mrs. Bush's message about listening to our bodies and that more people should pay attention to the unique symptoms women who have heart problems have. I had trouble Monday night, tuned in to news reports on Mrs. Bush on Tuesday, and on Wednesday night I went to the hospital. Mrs. Bush has a beautiful platform—something truly worthwhile to promote to save lives—and I am very supportive of it."

"I had my heart attack at 30 years old. I am 5'4", 118 pounds, wear a size 6 dress, work out 5 times per week, do not smoke and eat healthy. Not all women who have heart disease are overweight, smoke and over 50. It does not matter what you wear or what size you are—this is the message the Red Dress Project sends. Can there be a more powerful symbol for a diseases that affects 8 million women?"

For more information about *The Heart Truth*, its Red Dress symbol, or women and heart disease, visit www.hearttruth.gov.

Press only: For more information about *The Heart Truth* campaign and its Red Dress symbol, contact Christiana Campos at (202) 452-9489. Photography supporting the campaign is available at www.hearttruth.gov.

