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**Improving Life,
One Breath
at a Time**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Asthma is a serious disease and was fatal for the Rooks Family.
Family's New Mission is to Help Those Living with Lung Disease in Inland Northwest

SPOKANE- Rachel Rooks can't remember a time in her life when asthma wasn't a factor. Watching her Mom turn blue and lying prone on the floor during an asthma attack. While, Rachel endured four hospitalizations before the age of five due to her own asthma.

"Most people think that because asthma is so prevalent, it's not a big deal. The truth is, asthma is a serious disease. It can be fatal. My family found that out the hard way," says Rachel.

On May 22nd, 2006, Rachel and her family's life changed forever as her Mom, Donna finally succumbed to asthma. Since her mom's death, Rachel has made it her mission to educate others about the dangers of asthma and other lung health threats in the Inland Northwest. Taking on the role of Family Team Chair for the 2008 Spokane Asthma Walk presented by Safeco Insurance aligns perfectly with her goals.

This year's Spokane *Asthma* Walk presented by Safeco Insurance takes place on Saturday, May 17th at 8:30 a.m. at the Spokane Valley YMCA. Prior to the Asthma Walk at 10:00 a.m., there will be a Lung Health Expo, including an asthma presentation with Q&A from Dr. Michael McCarthy at 9:15 a.m. The 5K Walk takes place on the adjacent Centennial Trail. Forty corporate and family teams are registered and an expected 500 walkers will participate.

"My dad and my sisters and I miss my mom every single day," says Rachel. "We became involved with the American Lung Association to try and make an impact on the lives of people in our area who are living with lung disease. If one person can have their life changed or bettered because of a donation that we receive in my mom's name, then my mom's death will not have been in vain."

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In recognition of Asthma Awareness month, the fourth annual Spokane Asthma Walk helps highlight local asthma awareness efforts in May. The Spokane Asthma Walk is presented by Safeco Insurance and other local premier sponsors include – Kalispel-Tribe of Indians and Molina Healthcare as Regional Partners; and Genentech-Novartis, Sterling Savings Bank and YMCA as Event Partners; along with other local sponsors from the Inland Northwest. The Walk is one of more than 150 American Lung Association Asthma Walks involving 50,000 walkers nationwide, raising \$8 million to support asthma research and educational programs. Many event participants have asthma or a family member or friend who suffers from asthma or another lung disease.

The American Lung Association of the Northwest is Blowing the Whistle on Asthma because close to 20 million Americans currently have asthma; of which nearly 11 million have had an asthma attack in the past year. In Washington State alone, more than 500,000 people have asthma, including 125,000 children, equating to one in ten people. In Spokane County, approximately 40,000 adults and children have been diagnosed with asthma. Total direct medical costs for asthma reach \$240 million each year in our region. Walkers in the Spokane Asthma Walk are supporting the American Lung Association's research and education efforts to help people control their asthma and to find the cause and cure for this debilitating respiratory ailment.

About the American Lung Association of the Northwest

Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association of the Northwest is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association of the Northwest funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is "Improving life, one breath at a time." For more information about the American Lung Association of the Northwest or to support the work it does, call 1-800-732-9339 or log on to www.alaw.org

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