



For immediate release
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Woman just east of Albuquerque in her “walk n roll” across the US for vulnerable elderly and caregivers

Cross-country journey aims to raise awareness and funds for seniors and their caregivers (August 18, 2012) – North Carolina resident Teri Swezey will reach Albuquerque on Monday August 20, 2012 in her 3,039-mile trek across the United States to raise awareness and funds for vulnerable seniors and the family and friends who care for them. She is available for interviews—by phone or in person along the road.

She is making this journey in honor of her late mother, Mary, who had end-stage dementia and for whom she cared during the last few years of her life. Swezey, 57, is walking and riding her bicycle coast- to- coast, covering up to 30 miles a day. She will conclude her journey sometime in October 2012 at the Pacific Ocean in Cambria, California, which was her parents’ long-term adopted hometown and where they are buried.

Swezey’s “walk n roll”, entitled SOAR Feat 2012, is traversing 12 states. She began her trip on April 1, 2012, in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. By the time she reaches Albuquerque, Swezey will have walked and rolled close to 2,000 miles through nine states (NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, AR, OK, TX, and NM). Her route across New Mexico is taking her through or near the following towns: Texico, Clovis, Melrose, Fort Sumner, Vaughn, Encino, Willard, Estancia, Moriarty, Edgewood, Albuquerque, Socorro, Magdalena, Datil, Pie Town, Omega, Quezada, and Red Hill. After New Mexico, she will walk n roll through northern Arizona, Nevada, and Central California.

The inspiration for the SOAR name and logo, which can be seen on the SOAR Feat 2012 Web site, www.walkusa4soar.org, came from a photo of Swezey’s late mother performing a soaring swan dive. “So many individuals are struggling with the same issues I faced while I was caring for my mother,” said Swezey. “I believe that by raising awareness, many others who share the same struggles mom and I went through, will find relief and support along their own journeys with aging.”

Swezey, a public health researcher, is interviewing many caregivers, elderly, and service providers about the challenges they are facing in today's tough financial times. Her mission is to reveal unrecognized needs in rural America by giving voice to those who feel isolated and unheard, and to promote avenues that meet those needs.

Funds raised during the SOAR Feat 2012 walk will be used to tell the unheard stories of caregivers and their loved ones in rural America and to cover some of the costs of the walk. Additionally, many elderly struggle with paying for prescriptions and food, and caregivers are often unable to have a break from their caregiving responsibilities. These themes came up in discussions with seniors, caregivers, and service providers while I was caring for mom. They have been reinforced in discussions with people during the SOAR Feat 2012 walk n roll. SOAR's ultimate goal is thus to provide much-needed assistance for prescription co-pays, low-income meal programs, and relief services for caregivers.

AARP North Carolina is supporting Swezey on her walk and she is spreading the word about AARP's –Decide.Create.Share., a national campaign aimed at increasing Baby Boomer women's awareness about and planning for their own long-term care. Swezey's walk is featured in an article on caregiving in the April 2012 issue of the *AARP Bulletin*: www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving/info-04-2012/caregivers-take-care-of-yourself-first-nc.print.html

Swezey also has support from other sponsors, including First Step Pro-Wellness, Carrboro Family Vision, Great Outdoor Provision Co., Fleet Feet Sports, D&H RV Center, Creative Wellness, and Triangle Acupuncture Clinic. She is picking up support and sponsors during her journey, as individuals and organization learn about her mission.

On her trip, Swezey has a friend following a few miles behind her in a truck and trailer, which is their home base. She also Tweets updates about her experiences and location along the SOAR Feat 2012 route daily.

For more information and to follow her journey, please visit the SOAR Feat 2012 Web site at <http://walkusa4soar.org>. The site includes a media page with press coverage and a fact sheet about the walk, her blog, and pages where she posts photos and videos throughout the duration of her six- to seven-month journey.

Interested parties can also follow Swezey on **Twitter** at <http://twitter.com/#!/SOARFeat2012> or on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/pages/SOAR-Feat-2012/202807459751260