



**For immediate release**  
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**Baby boomer woman nearing halfway point in her 3,039-mile walk across America for vulnerable elderly and caregivers**

***Cross-country journey aims to raise awareness and funds for seniors and their caregivers (July 16, 2012)*** – By the time North Carolina resident Teri Swezey reaches Norman, OK on Friday July 20<sup>th</sup>, she will have completed nearly half of 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 while she’s walking.

Swezey’s walk, entitled SOAR Feat 2012, is traversing 12 states. She began her trip on April 1, 2012, in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. When she reaches Norman, she will have walked over 1,400 miles through seven states (NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, AR, OK).

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 coast- to- coast, covering about 15-20 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.

She’s walked through or near the following towns and cities in OK so far: Spiro, Keota, Stigler, Whitefield, Enterprise, Eufaula, Raiford, Dustin, Wetumka, Seminole, and Tecumseh. After Norman, she will be walking through or near Newcastle, Blanchard, Chickasha, Cement, Cyril, Fletcher, Elgin, Cache, Lawton, Indianola, Snyder, Headrick, Altus, East Duke, McQueen, Gould, and Hollis.

Her route after Oklahoma takes her through the panhandle of Texas, central New Mexico, northern Arizona and Nevada, and Central California. She has been stopping along the way to talk to seniors and their caregivers about their experiences with aging and caregiving. Swezey is also raising money for her nonprofit organization, Seniors Obtaining Assistance and Resources, Inc. (SOAR).

The inspiration for the SOAR name and logo, which can be seen on the SOAR Feat 2012 Web site, [www.walkusa4soar.org](http://www.walkusa4soar.org), came from a photo of Swezey's late mother performing an awesome 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." SOAR's mission is to help meet the needs of vulnerable elderly and their caregivers, focusing on three specific areas:

- 1) Prescription co-pay assistance for seniors
- 2) Low-income meal assistance for seniors
- 3) Relief services for caregivers of the elderly (known as respite).

"These are three common areas of need that I came across as I began to talk with others who have cared for seniors," said Swezey, who by profession is a public health researcher. AARP North Carolina is supporting Swezey on her walk and she is spreading the word about AARP's – Decide.Create.Share., a national campaign that is 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](http://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, GOAL ZERO, and Triangle Acupuncture Clinic. She is also picking up support and sponsors during her walk, as individuals and organization learn about her mission.

On her journey, Swezey has a friend following a few miles behind her in a truck and trailer, which will be their home base. Swezey 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](http://www.facebook.com/pages/SOAR-Feat-2012/202807459751260)