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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joni Eareckson Tada to Undergo Surgery for Breast Cancer Disability advocate and quadriplegic models grace, gratitude and new empathy for cancer survivors

AGOURA HILLS, Calif., June 23, 2010 – Internationally-beloved disability advocate, artist and quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada has been diagnosed with breast cancer, it was announced today by Doug Mazza, [Joni and Friends International Disability Center](#) president and COO, following confirmation by her physicians.

“Joni is to undergo several more tests, followed by surgery within the week,” said Mazza. “The extent of the cancer will not be determined until the procedure.”

Ken Tada, Joni’s husband of nearly 28 years, is very hopeful. “The doctors have assured us that more advancements have been made in the last five years in treating breast cancer than in the last 150 years,” he said. “We are confident Joni is in very good hands.”

Joni echoed Ken’s sentiments. “I’ve often said that our afflictions come from the hand of our all-wise and sovereign God, who loves us and wants what is best for us. So, although cancer is something new, I am content to receive from God whatever He deems fit for me,” she said. “Yes, it’s alarming, but rest assured that Ken and I are utterly convinced that God is going to use this to stretch our faith, brighten our hope and strengthen our witness to others.”

Joni, a quadriplegic for more than 40 years, is founder of Joni and Friends International Disability Center, and has been a strong advocate for people with disabilities. She has served on the National Council on Disability and the Disability Advisory Committee to the U.S. State Department. She is senior associate for disability concerns for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and serves in an advisory capacity to the American Leprosy Mission, the National Institute on Learning Disabilities, as well as on the boards of reference for the Christian Writers’ Guild and the Christian Medical and Dental Society.

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“We’ve always prized the ministry God has given Joni and Friends to people facing a variety of disabilities; everything from autism to Alzheimer’s, from spina bifida to spinal cord injury,” said Joni. “For years I have hoped that my quadriplegia *might* encourage people struggling with cancer ... now I have a chance to *truly* empathize and journey alongside, affirming that God’s grace is *always* sufficient for whatever the disease or disability.”

Following surgery, Joni will receive treatment based on the findings. “Thankfully, my quadriplegia does not significantly impact either the surgery or the treatment. I’m like any other woman who has breast cancer,” said Joni. “I want to pour all my energies into getting better.”

Updates regarding Joni’s health and progress will be posted to the “Joni’s Corner” section of the Joni and Friends ministry website at www.joniandfriends.org. Well-wishers are invited to post assurances of their prayers and encouragement to Joni and her husband.

Joni and Friends continues to serve the disability community through its International Disability Center, offering a wide array of life-affirming ministries to people with disabilities around the world, including international radio and television programs featuring inspirational stories.

Wheels for the World enables thousands of individuals to receive wheelchairs and the life-giving message of the Gospel. Every year families affected by disability learn that they are not alone when they attend Family Retreats across the U.S. and around the world. The Joni and Friends [Christian Institute on Disability](http://www.christianinstituteondisability.org) equips the Christian community to engage in bioethics and value of life issues. More information can be found online at the ministry’s new website, www.joniandfriends.org.

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Note to Editors: For more information about Joni and Friends or to arrange an interview with Joni and Friends representatives, please contact Julie Shultz of A. Larry Ross Communications at 972.267.1111 or julie@alarryross.com.