



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**10th Annual Dream Makers Gala
Raises Over \$222,000 to Support Stomach Cancer Research, Patients, and Families**

Debbie's Dream Foundation Celebrated a Decade of Helping Patients and Families and Funding Research

Fort Lauderdale, Fla. – (May 17, 2019) – Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) celebrated its 10th Annual Dream Makers Gala on Saturday, May 4, 2019, at the Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida. With 316 registrants, more than \$222,000 was raised to fund research and support stomach cancer patients and families worldwide. Guests enjoyed a cocktail hour, silent and live auctions, dinner, awards ceremony, and dancing to live music performed by cover band Sekond Nature. Louis Aguirre, the Anchor/Reporter for WPLG Local 10, served as MC for the evening and led guests through an incredible night of entertainment and fun in celebration of "A Decade of DDF."

David Kubiliun, Esq. of Greenspoon Marder was the chair of this year's event for the seventh consecutive year. "Leading the Gala each year is an honor that I will always cherish, but this year is special as we celebrated ten years of making a difference in the landscape of stomach cancer," said Kubiliun, also a member of DDF's Board of Directors. "It makes me feel proud to know that DDF will continue its relentless commitment to finding a cure for this disease through honoring the legacy of my dear friend Debbie Zelman, who founded this organization."

Event sponsors included Title Sponsor Peter Palandjian; Emerald Sponsors Envision Physician Services, Lilly Oncology, Netzer Family Charitable Foundation, and Ross and Liz Tannenbaum; Ruby Sponsors Merck and Westside Regional Medical Center Staff; and Sapphire Sponsors Amerijet, Andrew Guttman and Family, Graystone Consulting, Lash & Goldberg, LLP, Tito's Handmade Vodka, and Westside Regional Medical Center.

This year, DDF honored the following individuals for their incredible dedication to serving others: Royal Poinciana Community Leadership Award presented to Barbara Simmons, CEO of Westside Regional Medical Center; Dream Makers Humanitarian Award presented to Dr. Charles and Suzanne Lago and Drs. Gregg and Abby Wilentz; Excellence in Communications Award presented to #1 New York Times bestselling author Brad Meltzer, Esq.; Tree of Life Medical Award presented to Dr. Yelena Janjigian of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; and Young Philanthropist Award presented to Sydney Silverstein of NSU University School.

In furtherance of DDF's ongoing mission, \$150,000 in fellowship grants was awarded to three young researchers to support them in finding a cure for stomach cancer. "DDF has awarded \$1,000,000 to fund stomach cancer research to date," said Executive Director Andrea Eidelman. "This is of critical importance because stomach cancer receives the least amount of federal funding per cancer death. The funds we raised this evening will make a tremendous impact. We greatly appreciate the support of our donors in helping us achieve this great milestone."

To learn more about DDF and this year's grant recipients, visit www.DebbiesDream.org.

About Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer

DDF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about gastric cancer, advancing funding for research, and providing education and support internationally to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF seeks as its ultimate goal to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

(More)

DDF was founded in 2009 by Debbie Zelman after she was diagnosed with stage IV incurable gastric cancer in 2008 and given only weeks to live. Debbie is considered a pioneer by many for bringing awareness to the plight of stomach cancer patients worldwide, as well as to the lack of federal funding for stomach cancer research. She did all of this while receiving hundreds of rounds of chemo, in addition to daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, at the age of 50, almost a decade later. As a result of her leadership, DDF now has a Scientific and Medical Advisory Board of world-renowned doctors and chapters throughout the United States and in Canada and Germany. DDF strives to continue Debbie's mission and to make her dream a reality. To learn more about DDF, please visit us at www.DebbiesDream.org.



Photo One: Emerald Sponsor Jeff Netzer, DDF Honorary Board member Willard Shepard of NBC 6 South Florida, and Gala Chair David Kubliun



Photo Two: DDF Board President Michael Ehren, Executive Director Andrea Eidelman, 2019 Excellence in Communication Award recipient Brad Meltzer, and MC Louis Aguirre

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