



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer Held  
Its Annual Board Appreciation Reception**

*DDF celebrated its distinguished Board of Directors, welcomed new Board members, and recognized major contributors to its mission.*

**FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – (October 2, 2019)** – Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) held its annual Board Appreciation Reception on September 12, 2019, at Bistro Mezzaluna in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The ceremony takes place each year to recognize the dedication and commitment of DDF's Board of Directors and to welcome new members to the Board. In addition, DDF recognized its major donors who help contribute to its mission of raising awareness and funds for stomach cancer research and supporting patients, families, and caregivers.

The reception included a delicious lunch, a meet and greet, followed by a ceremony thanking donors and recognizing current and incoming DDF board members. This year's new Board of Directors are Melani Vincelli, a nearly 10-year stage IV stomach cancer survivor, and Steve Melen, a stage IIIB stomach cancer survivor of almost 11 years. Melani first became involved with DDF shortly after she and late DDF Founder Debbie Zelman appeared in a 2011 episode of the Dr. Oz Show for a segment about the rise of stomach cancer. She now serves as DDF's New Jersey South Chapter Leader, a mentor in DDF's Patient Resource Education Program (PREP), and an advocate and spokesperson for stomach cancer awareness. Steve Melen joined DDF as a PREP mentor in 2018 and has since served as Event Chair of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Day at the Races event in Berkeley, California. He is also a PREP mentor, advocate, and spokesperson for stomach cancer awareness.

“Our Board Appreciation Reception is always a wonderful opportunity for us to personally acknowledge how much we truly appreciate the time, dedication, and continued support of our wonderful Board of Directors,” said Andrea Eidelman, DDF Executive Director. “We are also extremely excited to thank our generous donors who help us to continue our mission. More importantly, we are thrilled to welcome two newcomers, Melani Vincelli and Steve Melen, to our Board of Directors to help guide the mission of DDF.”

Each DDF Board member serves a two-year term advising, governing, overseeing policy and direction, and assisting with leadership and general promotion of DDF as to support the organization's mission. For more information about DDF, visit <http://www.DebbiesDream.org> or call (954) 475-1200.

**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](http://www.DebbiesDream.org).



**Photo One:** New DDF Board of Director Melani Vincelli received the 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award for her outstanding volunteerism, chapter development, and patient support during DDF's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill in 2017.



**Photo Two:** DDF's new Board of Director Steve Melen serving as Event Chair for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Day at the Races in Berkeley, California on June 8, 2019.

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