



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer Hosts A Historic 12th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day In 2024

More than 150 advocates joined DDF in Washington, DC., urging Congress members to fund more research for stomach cancer.

Washington, DC. - (March 5, 2024) - Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer celebrated a historic turnout for its 12th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day hosted February 5-7, 2024, in Washington, DC. On the morning of February 6, just as the world learned of country music legend Toby Keith's passing from stomach cancer, nearly 150 advocates demonstrated resilience and determination on Capitol Hill, attending 221 scheduled meetings with lawmakers. The advocates passionately conveyed critical asks, urging Congress to pass the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 spending bills to prevent disruptions in essential research funding, keep stomach cancer on the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP) list for FY 2025, and increase FY 2025 funding to the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute.

DDF proudly recognized two stomach cancer congressional champions this year, Congresswoman Angie Craig (D-MN) and Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC). Their unwavering support in Congress has significantly raised stomach cancer awareness and has led to increased federal research dollars for stomach cancer. Over the years, DDF's advocacy efforts have resulted in \$34.4 million dedicated to stomach cancer research through the PRCRP to date. DDF advocacy also led to the six new R01 grants for the Program on the Origins of Gastroesophageal Cancers awarded in Fall 2022.

CEO Andrea Eidelman expressed her gratitude, acknowledging advocates' challenges, especially given the news of Toby Keith's passing. She remarked, "The news of Toby's death was top of mind for advocates and lawmakers as the world caught a glimpse of how devastating stomach cancer can be. This year's event was a testament to our community's resilience and dedication, and we look forward to increasing research efforts by our federal government to help find a cure for stomach cancer."

The impactful three-day event included the 2nd Annual Patient Advocate Retreat, featuring insightful presentations from Medical Oncologist Dr. Michael Cusnir, Clinical Oncology Dietician Mary-Eve Brown, Art Therapist Emily Lipson, and a live cooking demonstration by Emmy-nominated Chef Nathan Lyon. These interactive sessions foster connection and provide valuable information to patients and caregivers.

DDF expresses heartfelt gratitude to all advocates, sponsors, and supporters who contributed to the success of the 12th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day. The collective efforts continue to drive progress toward increased awareness, research funding, and finding a cure for stomach cancer. Advocacy Day was made possible through an independent grant from Merck &

Co., Inc. and support from Amgen as our Advocacy Day Silver Sponsors. We also extend our gratitude to the sponsors of our 2nd Annual Patient Advocate Retreat – Gold Sponsors Astellas and Merck; Silver Sponsors Amgen and Jazz Pharmaceuticals; Bronze Sponsor Taiho Oncology; Advocacy Sponsor No Stomach for Cancer; and Supporting Sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

For more information about DDF programs and initiatives, please 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 research funding, and providing international education and support to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF’s ultimate goal is to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

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 and daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, at 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 Canada and Germany. DDF strives to continue Debbie’s mission to make her dream a reality. To learn more, visit www.DebbiesDream.org.



Photo One: Participants of the 12th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day held from February 5-7, 2024.

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