

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Michelle R. Bernth
American Lung Association
314-645-5505 x1001 (p)
636-866-8340 (c)
mbernth@lungmo.org

**Rams Linebacker Chris Draft to Serve as the *Celebrity Climber* in First-Ever
Competitive Stairclimb in St. Louis**

Master the Met Stairclimb Event will Benefit the American Lung Association

St. Louis, MO, February 27, 2008—Rams linebacker Chris Draft will serve as the *Celebrity Climber* in the first-ever competitive stairclimb event, entitled *Master the Met*, in St. Louis on March 1, 2008. Draft will be the lead-off climber in the race as participants compete to climb the tallest building in downtown St. Louis—the 42 floor Metropolitan Square building. Participants may run or walk each one of the more than 1,000 steps on their way to a celebration at the top.

“Because of my personal battle with asthma, I know the importance of lung disease research and education,” Draft said. “I am excited to be a part of such a unique event in St. Louis that benefits the American Lung Association.”

Chris Draft is a ten-year veteran of the NFL. His football career includes time on the rosters of the Chicago Bears, San Francisco 49ers, Atlanta Falcons, Carolina Panthers and the St. Louis Rams. His strong passion for philanthropic endeavors keeps him busy off the field, actively involved in various community endeavors with a strong commitment to youth, civic groups and health awareness organizations. In 2008, Draft received the NFL Alumni Spirit Award. Draft is the founder of the Chris Draft Family Foundation, whose mission since 2006 has been to empower families to live healthy lifestyles. Toward this end, the Foundation has launched its Asthma Team initiative, designed to raise awareness by sharing information and inspirational stories from asthma sufferers, their families, and health professionals.

“We are very excited to have Chris Draft be a part of this event. He is an amazing athlete, a dedicated philanthropist and a champion of lung disease awareness and education,” said Michelle Bernth, Senior Vice President of Marketing for the American Lung Association of the Central States. “We know that Chris will make a great lead-off climber and will challenge those behind him to succeed in the Master the Met stairclimb.”

Stairclimbs are an emerging athletic competition that take participants beyond the average run/walk event. These “vertical marathons” are growing in popularity and St. Louis is leading the way by hosting this one-of-a-kind event in Missouri. Through team sponsorships and donations, *Master the Met* participants will support the American Lung Association’s fight against lung disease. Currently the third leading cause of death in the U.S., lung disease kills one in seven Americans. Proceeds from *Master the Met* will help find cures, protect clean air and promote smokefree kids.

To make a donation to this event, visit www.masterthemet.com or call the American Lung Association at 314-645-5505 x1014.

Now in their second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is “Improving life, one breath at a time.”

###