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June 1, 2012

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Former Bear Brings National Lung Cancer Awareness Campaign Back To Chicago

Chicago (June 3, 2012) – On Sunday, former Chicago Bear’s linebacker, Chris Draft, will return to Chicago as part of Team Draft’s *national campaign to change the face of lung cancer*, the disease that claimed the life of Draft’s late wife, Keasha, last December.

Team Draft, an initiative of the Chris Draft Family Foundation, is dedicated to raising lung cancer awareness and increasing badly needed research funding by shattering the misconception that lung cancer is a “smoker’s disease.” ***The fact is, anybody can get lung cancer.*** Yet, despite the fact that between 20,000 and 30,000 people who have never smoked—including Keasha—are diagnosed with lung cancer in the United States each year, the smoking stigma negatively impacts lung cancer research funding, which pales in comparison to funding for other major cancers and diseases. Team Draft is out to change all that. “If we can take away the stigma that says you have to be a smoker to get lung cancer, we have a real chance to educate people about the true nature of the disease,” explains Draft.

Since Chris and Keasha launched Team Draft at their wedding in November of last year, Team Draft has been on a mission to tackle cancer. Team Draft’s national campaign to raise public awareness and share the hope that now exists for people diagnosed with the disease has taken it to more than a dozen states and 30 of the top cancer research and treatment facilities in the country, including Northwestern University’s Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rush University Medical Center, and the University of Chicago Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Our hope is not only to positively impact research funding, but to improve the quality of life for those affected by lung cancer,” says Draft. “We aren’t fighting against lung cancer, we’re fighting for people. That’s why we are leading this national campaign to change the face of lung cancer.” And this weekend, Team Draft is bringing the campaign back to Chicago.

On Sunday, June 3, Team Draft will celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day with thousands of cancer survivors, family, and friends at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University’s 19th Annual Cancer Survivors’ Celebration and Walk. The celebration begins in Grant Park at South Columbus Drive and East Balbo Avenue at 7:30 a.m.

After the celebration, Team Draft will head to McCormick Place to attend the 48th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (“ASCO”). At the meeting, Team Draft will speak with some of the leading lung cancer researchers and treating physicians in the word about the exciting advancements being made in early detection and treatment of the disease. Later that evening, Team Draft will head to the Radisson Blu Aqua Chicago for the Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center’s ASCO Reception, which begins at 6:00 p.m.

The Facts About Lung Cancer

For decades, the facts regarding lung cancer have been sobering:

- Anyone can get lung cancer.
- Over 60% of lung cancers are diagnosed in people who never smoked or in former smokers.¹
- Lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the #1 cancer killer for women in 1987.²
- Lung cancer kills more people than any other cancer³, and takes more lives than breast, cervical, and prostate cancers . . . *combined*.⁴
- The five year survival rate for lung cancer is just 16%—a rate that has changed very little since the 1970's.⁵

But now there is *HOPE!* The use of state-of-the-art lung cancer screening techniques is reducing mortality rates by 20% in some patient groups⁶ while cutting-edge team-based, multidisciplinary treatment procedures are improving the quality of life for lung cancer patients across the country. And thanks to advances in molecular tumor mutation testing, researchers and treating physicians are developing effective personal lung cancer treatments designed to extent and, ultimately, save lives.⁷ The key to making even greater strides is funding, but funding for lung cancer research is impacted by the “smoker’s disease” stigma.⁸ That’s why Team Draft is campaigning to change the face of lung cancer.

About The Chris Draft Family Foundation and Team Draft

The Chris Draft Family Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering families to live healthy lifestyles. The Foundation focuses on several initiatives with overarching themes that stress the importance of education, healthy lifestyles, character development, personal responsibility, self-discipline, and physical fitness. To learn more about the Foundation, please visit www.chrisdraftfamilyfoundation.org.

Through its Team Draft initiative, the Foundation is carrying on Keasha’s fight to tackle cancer by promoting awareness, research, and scholarship and to save lives by changing the face of lung cancer. Team Draft is dedicated to raising awareness, accelerating research for a cure, and giving hope, comfort, and inspiration to the patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers who are battling the disease every day. To learn more about Team Draft, share your story, and respond and donate, please visit www.teamdraft.org. You can follow the national campaign to change the face of lung cancer on our blog at www.thedraftreport.net, and don’t forget to “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TeamDraft.

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¹ Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Women’s Health Policy & Advocacy Program, *Out of the Shadows: Women and Lung Cancer* (2010), at 4.

² American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures 2011*, at 15.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Out of the Shadows*, at 4.

⁵ *Cancer Facts & Figures*, at 16; *Out of the Shadows*, at 9; American Cancer Society, *Cancer Statistics 2009: A Presentation From the American Cancer Society*, at 22.

⁶ *Cancer Facts & Figures*, at 15.

⁷ *Out of the Shadows*, at 14.

⁸ *Id.*, at 17-18, 20.