



***For Immediate Release***

January 17, 2013

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**Former Falcon Helps 15-Year-Old Lung Cancer Survivor Celebrate Another Birthday  
With Trip To NFC Championship Game**

(ATLANTA, GA) – On January 8, 2012, Abby Wilson celebrated her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. While birthdays are special to all of us, they are uniquely important to Abby who has been battling a rare form of pediatric lung cancer since she was 9 years old. This year, Team Draft co-founder and former Falcons linebacker, Chris Draft, is helping Abby celebrate by taking her and her parents to the NFC Championship Game between the Falcons and the San Francisco 49ers at the Georgia Dome this Sunday. The event is part of Team Draft's Survivor at Every Stadium initiative.

Having been a part of the last Falcons team to reach the NFC Championship Game, Draft knows something about what it takes to get to this level, but he says that is nothing compared to Abby's strength and determination. "Abby's courage and grit are truly an inspiration, and I can't think of anybody I would rather have join me at the game," says Draft.

Draft, who lost his wife, Keasha, to lung cancer in December 2011, met Abby last year at a stop on Team Draft's National Campaign to Change the Face of Lung Cancer. On December 13, 2012, Chris Draft Family Foundation Board Member and Falcons Cheerleader Coordinator, Chato Waters, arranged to have some of the Falcons Cheerleaders join Team Draft as we visited Abby at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center.

This Sunday's game is just the latest in Team Draft's Survivor at Every Stadium initiative. Working with teams throughout the NFL, Team Draft is leading this national effort to have lung cancer survivors, researchers and doctors attend games across the country. As part of Team Draft's National Campaign to Change the Face of Lung Cancer, the Survivor at Every Stadium initiative is designed to raise awareness, give hope to those battling the disease, and shine a light on the important work being done at cancer research and treatment centers around the country. The initiative will cap off at the Pro Bowl in Hawaii on January 27.

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 and Abby—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 2011, 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 those diagnosed with the disease has taken it to nearly 60 of the top cancer research and treatment facilities in North America.

“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.”

### **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.<sup>1</sup>
- Lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the #1 cancer killer for women in 1987.<sup>2</sup>
- Lung cancer kills more people than any other cancer<sup>3</sup>, and takes more lives than breast, cervical, and prostate cancers . . . *combined*.<sup>4</sup>
- The five year survival rate for lung cancer is just 16%—a rate that has changed very little since the 1970’s.<sup>5</sup>

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 groups<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> The key to making even greater strides is funding, but funding for lung cancer research is impacted by the “smoker’s disease” stigma.<sup>8</sup> That’s why Team Draft is campaigning to change the face of lung cancer.

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

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures 2011*, at 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Out of the Shadows*, at 4.

<sup>5</sup> *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.

<sup>6</sup> *Cancer Facts & Figures*, at 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Out of the Shadows*, at 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*, at 17-18, 20.

## **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](http://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](http://www.teamdraft.org). You can follow the national campaign to change the face of lung cancer on our blog at [www.thedraftreport.net](http://www.thedraftreport.net), and don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TeamDraft](http://www.facebook.com/TeamDraft).

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