

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Philadelphia's Top Medical Professionals and Premier Chefs unite to increase awareness of celiac disease and the gluten-free lifestyle.

Appetite for Awareness Event Returns to Wachovia Center on September 30th!

Ambler, PA (August 24th, 2009)- The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) and title sponsor Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals will hold the 6th *Appetite for Awareness* event on Wednesday, September 30th 2009 at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia. The annual affair is the nation's most prestigious gluten-free event and educational program dedicated to the topic of celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder affecting 1 in 133 Americans.

Appetite for Awareness teams top Philadelphia- area chefs and doctors together in an 'iron chef' style competition to create the best gluten-free dish. Guests will enjoy sampling gluten-free creations from over 25 of the area's preeminent restaurants, gluten-free beer, wine, and products from more than 50 of the nation's finest gluten-free vendors. All attendees will take home a fabulous goodie bag filled with treats from a variety of gluten- free vendors.

NFCA will be honoring John Binswanger and his family for their leadership and support in building the organization over the last five years.

"John Binswanger and his family have a legacy of support for healthcare initiatives and have been instrumental in NFCA's efforts to drive diagnosis and improve quality-of-life for people with celiac disease," said NFCA executive director Alice Bast.

An estimated three million Americans have celiac disease yet 95% remain undiagnosed, resulting in a fourfold increase in the risk of early death and numerous debilitating conditions including infertility, neuropathy and even cancer. The only treatment is a lifelong gluten-free diet eliminating all forms of wheat, barley and rye.

Comcast-Spectacor Chairman Ed Snider, who is a member of the NFCA Board of Directors, generously donated the use of the Wachovia Center, which will play host to the highly anticipated event for the second year in a row. In 2008, *Appetite for Awareness* drew a crowd of almost 1500, and raised \$340,000 to support NFCA's national awareness campaign and celiac disease education initiatives.

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Christina Pirello, Emmy Award-winning host of the national public television series 'Christina Cooks', will emcee the gluten-free challenge to win the evenings 'Best Gluten-Free Dish' and 'People's Choice Award' top honors. Participating restaurants include Amada, Beneluxx Tasting Room, Bindi, Café Estelle, Capital Grille, Chifa, Cochon, Devil's Den, Distrito, Little Fish, Lolita, Melograno, Mirabella's Café, Osteria, Sauté Restaurant, South Philly Tap Room, Tinto, Vetri, Xochil, and Zahav.

In conjunction with *Appetite for Awareness*, all participating restaurants receive training in gluten-free kitchen protocol through NFCA's Gluten-Free Resource Education Awareness Training (GREAT) program. Together, NFCA and these participating establishments will expand Philadelphia's Gluten-Free Neighborhood, the first recognized gluten-free, celiac disease friendly city in the U.S.

Appetite for Awareness will take place from 7:00pm. - 9:30pm, with a VIP reception from 5:30pm- 7:00pm. Admission fees are \$250 VIP reception, \$100 General Admission and \$35 for Students (with valid ID).

Tickets can be purchased online through NFCA's website, www.CeliacCentral.org.

About Celiac Disease

Celiac disease is an autoimmune digestive disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. It is triggered by consumption of the protein called gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye. Left untreated, people with celiac disease can develop further complications such as other autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, thyroid disease, and some cancers. An estimated three million Americans have celiac disease, but about 1 in every 4700 with the disease receives an accurate diagnosis. The only currently effective treatment is a gluten-free diet.

About the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness

The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness and funding for celiac disease that will advance research, education and screening amongst medical professionals, children and adults. Visit www.celiaccentral.org for more information.

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