



Contact: Whitney Ehret
NFCA Communications Director
(215) 325-1306 x103
whitney@celiaccentral.org

Jolly the Elf Raises Awareness of Celiac Disease

Blue Bell, PA (December 2nd, 2009) - Think Young Productions and the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) are joining forces to raise funds and awareness of celiac disease through the sale of *Jolly the Elf*, a wonderful story created and written in the holiday tradition by Jo Shepherd Ripley.

For every book or product sold through the Jolly Website (www.jollytheelf.com), Think Young Productions will make a donation to NFCA's National Celiac Awareness Campaign.

To help support NFCA spread awareness about celiac disease by buying *Jolly the Elf*, go to NFCA's website at www.celiaccentral.org and link to Jolly or go directly to www.jollytheelf.com. Just enter "celiac" or "NFCA" in the "Where did you hear about us" box on the Buy Now Page to support this effort.

"We are thrilled to partner with such a wonderful organization that is the NFCA," said Jo Shepherd Ripley. "It is so important to help people suffering from celiac understand what they may do to help themselves. Anything that Jolly can do to assist in those efforts is an honor and a privilege for us."

Starting in 1963 as an informal story of the elf that saved Santa, the Jolly Tradition of elves coming to children's homes on Thanksgiving to help them remember to be their best has been spreading across the country. Just released in book form with John Blackford's illustrations, Jolly is a touching story of courage and friendship.

Jake Hunter, a Philadelphia high school student and a celiac patient, created illustrations for the book. Jake's "elf icons" appear throughout the book and help capture the whimsical spirit of the Jolly Tale. When asked what he thought of partnering with NFCA, Jake observed, "Jolly knows what it is to be a good friend. I am glad something I helped create is lending a hand to somebody else."

"By raising awareness of this disease, we can save millions of Americans from unnecessary suffering. NFCA seeks to secure a celiac diagnosis for 1 million individuals in the next 5 years, and we are grateful to have the support of *Jolly the Elf* and Think Young Productions in this effort." adds Whitney Ehret, NFCA Director of Communications.

Celiac Disease is an autoimmune digestive disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. While an estimated three million Americans have celiac disease, 95% remain undiagnosed. The NFCA raises awareness of the disease so that people may seek treatment earlier and live better, healthier lives.

When celiac goes undiagnosed, it results in a fourfold increase in the risk of early death. Lack of treatment may also lead to complications such as other autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, infertility, neuropathy, thyroid disease, and some cancers. The only treatment for celiac disease is a lifelong gluten-free diet, eliminating all forms of wheat, barley, and rye.

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About the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness

The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of celiac in order to gain prompt and accurate diagnosis for those suffering, support the health and wellbeing of those with the disease, and facilitate research that will better understand the disorder and find a cure. Visit www.celiaccentral.org for information.

About Jolly the Elf

Jolly the Elf is a story for all ages. If you know the reindeer that guided Santa, you must meet the elf that saved him. Jolly knew Santa was in trouble. He did not have enough time to keep track of all of the good boys and girls and needed help from a friend. Santa needed Jolly. Jolly and his friends help Santa see how good and kind children are being by going to their homes and reporting back to Santa all the wonderful things they do. Jolly and his friends are part of what every child needs – someone to believe in them. For anyone who has children or is a child at heart, this story gets to the quick of what it means to be a person, a child – reach for the stars and maybe you will catch one. Visit www.jollytheelf.com for more information.

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