

For Immediate Release



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**NFCA Expands Board of Directors and Scientific/Medical Advisory Board**  
*organization's leadership bodies announce distinguished new members*

**Ambler, PA (October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009)**- The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) welcomes Ms. Melissa Helmbrecht, CEO of Splashlife Inc., Mrs. Mindy Rich, Vice-Chairman of Rich Products Corporation, and Mrs. Kelley Topfer to its Board of Directors, as well as Ms. Ann Lee RD of Schar USA, and Robert Lerman, M.D., Ph.D. of MetaProteomics, Inc. to the NFCA Scientific/Medical Advisory Board.

The non-profit organization and its distinguished leadership bodies seek to raise awareness of celiac disease, an autoimmune digestive disorder affecting over 3 million Americans, yet undiagnosed in over 95% of individuals with the condition.

"Engaging these five dynamic leaders will allow NFCA to further its national awareness efforts, and achieve our goal to secure diagnosis for 1 million suffering Americans within the next 5 years," said NFCA founder and president Alice Bast.

**Melissa Helmbrecht** is a recognized leader nonprofit world and has extensive experience in mobilizing awareness groups. She is currently the Chairman and CEO of Splashlife Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering youth to take action for social change. Helmbrecht previously served as the 15th Circuit Governor for the American Bar Association Law Student Division and the ABA Committee for the Unmet Legal Needs of Children. In 2001, Melissa was honored by the American Bar Association for her work on behalf of foster children as president of the Children's Millenium Movement.

**Mindy Rich** is Vice-Chairman of Rich Products Corporation and a member of the Board of Directors of Rich Products Canada Corporation Ltd. She also serves as President of Rich Entertainment Group, overseeing the organization's baseball, entertainment and travel interests. Mindy is Board of Trustees member of The Culinary Institute of America, Mariners Hospital Foundation, Cleveland Clinic, and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation. Rich and her husband Bob founded Western New York United Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse in 1986.

**Kelly Topfer** comes to NFCA highly regarded for her passionate service and outstanding volunteer work. Kelly currently lives in Austin, Texas with her husband of 15 years and two children. Her longstanding record of community involvement includes efforts on behalf of numerous organizations such as The Austin Children's Shelter, Gold Ribbon Rescue animal shelter, and Vail Valley Medical Center. She also serves as the acting Booster Club Secretary of Bridge Point Elementary School, where her children attend.

**Anne Roland Lee, MEd, RD, LD**, is the Director of Nutritional Services for Schar USA, international leading specialist in gluten-free dietary products. Lee was formerly a nutritionist with the Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University, and is a respected authority on celiac disease and gluten intolerance. Ann has authored numerous abstracts and articles for professional journals including a study entitled, *'The effect of substituting alternative grains in the diet on the nutritional profile of the gluten-free diet'*, which was published in the Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics.

**-More-**

**Dr. Robert H. Lerman, M.D., PhD.,** is the Director of Medicine and Extramural Clinical Research, at MetaProteomics, Inc. Robert oversees the medical safety aspects of Metagenics' products, and provides expertise and guidance for the experimental design of onsite clinical studies and individual case management (ICM) in the Functional Medicine Research Center (FMRC). As a medical ambassador for Metagenics, he is responsible for developing relationships and new programs with physicians and surgeons throughout the US and abroad.

A complete list of NFCA's Board of Directors and Scientific/Medical Advisory Board can be found on the foundation's website, [www.celiaccentral.org](http://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. 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. Left untreated, people with celiac disease can develop further complications such as other autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, thyroid disease, and some cancers.

### **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](http://www.celiaccentral.org) for information.

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