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“A GIFT FOR ERIC’S BIRTHDAY” BRINGS SUPPORT TO HENDERSON HEART TRANSPLANT PATIENT SEAN SEMON



NEW YORK, NY – May 4, 2012 – On Friday, April 20th, the Eric De La Cruz Hope For Hearts Foundation asked the community of Henderson, NV to support area heart transplant patient Sean Semon. Scheduled on the birthday of Eric De La Cruz, a heart transplant candidate who passed away in 2009, the event at Henderson’s Claim Jumper restaurant was hosted by Eric’s sister and Hope For Hearts founder Veronica De La Cruz and drew dozens of local supporters whose food purchases and donations will help offset medical costs for the Semon family and others that the Foundation supports.

Diagnosed in 2007 with cardiomyopathy that will require a heart transplant, 35-year old Sean Semon and his family have been busy raising money for the anticipated costs ever since his insurer, Aetna, denied coverage for the operation in 2009.

“Sean’s recent enrollment in the new Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), made available through the Affordable Care Act, has given the family new hope that many of the costs will be covered,” commented De La Cruz, herself a television news anchor for MSNBC. “But long-term treatment and anti-rejection drugs, as well as the looming risk that the healthcare law (and Sean’s new coverage) will be struck down, mean the family must still keep raising funds.”

Claim Jumper donated 15% of supporters’ dining bills toward a fund helping the Semon family cover Sean’s medical expenses and projected transplant costs. Patrons were also encouraged to consider making a donation on their own to help out.

The Friday night event also helped raise local organ donation awareness during National Donate Life Month. Hope For Hearts partnered with Donate Life Nevada at the event to increase organ donor registration within the Henderson & Las Vegas area, offering an on-site registration booth.



In addition to the fundraiser, the Hope For Hearts Foundation spent the month of April communicating important organ donation information and encouragement through its social media communities, while promoting the “April 10 Challenge” which asked followers to recruit 10 new organ donors in the last 10 days of April.



A Gift for Eric’s Birthday was a birthday celebration in memory of Eric De La Cruz, after whom the organization is named. On July 4, 2009, Eric ran out of time waiting for a life-saving heart transplant delayed by denials from insurance companies. Support generated by Hope For Hearts at events like the one at Claim Jumper will be directed toward heart transplant patients in financial need in hopes that others do not face the struggles Eric did. In his memory and in recognition of the inspiration he has provided, the Semon family presented a birthday cake and photo collage to the De La Cruz family at the event.

About the Eric De La Cruz Hope For Hearts Foundation

The Hope For Hearts Foundation is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance to transplant patients in need and offers awareness and education programs aimed at supporting those facing the challenge of obtaining a heart transplant. The Foundation was formed in 2010 by De La Cruz after the death of her younger brother, Eric, who suffered from severe dilated cardiomyopathy and was denied insurance coverage for a heart transplant due to his pre-existing condition. Eric De La Cruz passed away on July 4, 2009 while awaiting a heart transplant.



About Veronica De La Cruz

Veronica De La Cruz is an MSNBC anchor and one of the current hosts of NBC's Early Today Show and MSNBC's First Look. In addition to her role as an MSNBC anchor, De La Cruz is an active volunteer with groups promoting healthcare reform. Ms. De La Cruz's full bio is available at www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42131556/ns/msnbc_tv-meet_the_faces_of_msnbc/ and two recent MSNBC PSA's on heart health can be viewed at www.hopeforheartsfoundation.org/Cooking.html and www.hopeforheartsfoundation.org/Exercise.html.

Those interested in learning more about the heart health and organ donation, as well as how to support the Eric De La Cruz Hope for Hearts Foundation, should visit the organization's website at www.hopeforheartsfoundation.org.

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