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Sky Foundation Seeks Blood Test for Early Pancreatic Cancer Detection

Local “thrivers” aims to make a difference

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. – March 11, 2009 – In the fall of 2007, Sheila Sky Kasselmann discovered she had pancreatic cancer and was surprised to learn that there was no test for early detection of the disease. After aggressive treatment, Kasselmann showed hopeful signs for recovery. Her doctors were so encouraged by her response to treatment that they asked her to transition from patient to partner and join them in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

In June 2008, Kasselmann created Sky Foundation, Inc. to fund research to discover a blood test for early detection of pancreatic cancer.

“The vital importance for early detection of pancreatic cancer is hitting the news media once again with the recent announcement of Chuck Daly’s stage IV pancreatic cancer,” said Kasselmann.

Dr. Michael Tainsky, a professor of cancer genetics and pathology at Wayne State University, is the team leader on the research project, which is a partnership between the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute and Henry Ford Health System. Dr. Tainsky believes that a diagnostic test for the early detection of pancreatic cancer can be found within three to five years. The scientific tools are available, and funding is all that is needed for the research to move forward. Currently, pancreatic cancer research constitutes less than 2% of the National Cancer Institute’s federal research budget.

Sky Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and operates with a volunteer Board of Directors with no paid staff.

Sky Foundation's immediate goal:

- Raise \$100,000 to allow vital research to be focused on pancreatic cancer. The funds raised through the foundation’s early efforts will remain in southeast Michigan and are placed in the Sky Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund at the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

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Background on pancreatic cancer:

Today, a pancreatic cancer diagnosis comes with grim survival statistics. Mortality rates have changed very little in the last three decades. Sky Foundation, Inc. wants to improve these statistics. When successful, this research for the early detection of pancreatic cancer will save lives and bring hope where little exists today.

Visit www.skyfoundationinc.org for more information. To make a secure on-line tax-deductible donation, PayPal is provided for your convenience.

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Note -- Sheila Kasselmann is available for interviews. Please contact me at 248.542.3991 with any questions and/or to arrange an interview. More information on the foundation can be found at www.skyfoundationinc.org.