'Diabetes Dad' Tom Karlya Rejoins Diabetes Research Institute Foundation

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Longs to fulfill promise of a cure for his daughter, others with diabetes

HOLLYWOOD, Fla., Nov. 6 /PRNewswire/ -- The Diabetes Research Institute Foundation (DRIF) announced that Tom Karlya will be rejoining the organization as vice president, effective November 17, and will be responsible for spearheading its national sponsorship initiatives and other fundraising programs.

Karlya is well-known in the diabetes community as the "Diabetes Dad," his ubiquitous pen name used for his monthly column, which appears at www.dLife.com/diabetesdad. Active in diabetes causes since 1992 when his daughter, Kaitlyn, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 2, Karlya was with the DRI Foundation for six years, from 1999 to 2005, and previously served as Northeast development director and national director of special projects.

He left the DRIF to join dLife TV as a producer, where he won 13 Telly Awards (former Cable Ace Awards), The Media Health (Freddie) Award, and was nominated for an Emmy. Despite the success of the television show, he longed to return to the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation to fulfill the promise of a cure for Kaitlyn and the millions of others living with diabetes.

"Over the last three years, I have been fortunate to have helped educate and inform many people about diabetes and how to live better and manage the disease. But then I remembered my original promise to Kaitlyn -- that promise was to give my all in supporting the best effort to find a cure. I truly believe that the DRI will lead this effort and that this is the place where I need to be and should be," said Karlya. "My experiences have convinced me that the DRI remains the most focused on ending diabetes during Kaitlyn's lifetime."

Robert A. Pearlman, president and CEO of the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, enthusiastically welcomed Karlya's return. "The DRIF has grown tremendously over the last few years and we are looking to expand even further by implementing new initiatives. When the opportunity presented itself, Tom expressed the interest in returning to the DRI Foundation in a role for which he is extremely well-suited. I speak for our National and Regional Boards of Directors and the entire DRIF staff in expressing how excited we are to have him back," he said.

Karlya's work on behalf of all children and adults with diabetes spans numerous organizations. This past summer, he was awarded The Jeff Hitchcock Distinguished Service Award from Children with Diabetes. He is also a recipient of the Advocate of the Year from the American Association of Diabetes Educators; Man of the Year From the Long Island Advertising Community for his work in diabetes; and The George Estabrook Award from Hofstra University, his alma mater, for his work in television and diabetes. He has received numerous commendations, including a personal message from the president of the United States for his work after Hurricane Katrina, where he was instrumental in organizing relief efforts to more than 10,000 people with diabetes.

Karlya resides in Medford, NY, with his wife, Jill. They have three children, TJ, 21, Kaitlyn, 18, and Rob, 13.

The mission of the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation is to provide the Diabetes Research Institute with the funding necessary to cure diabetes now. The Diabetes Research Institute, a center of excellence at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is a recognized world leader in cure-focused research. Since its inception in the
early 1970s, the DRI has made significant contributions to the field of diabetes research, pioneering many of the techniques used in islet transplantation. The DRI is now building upon these achievements by bridging cell-based therapies with emerging technologies to restore insulin production. For the millions of families already affected by diabetes, the Diabetes Research Institute is the best hope for a cure. For more information, please visit

www.diabetesresearch.org

Source: Diabetes Research Institute Foundation