

Northwestern Mutual launches Heroes for a Cure to honor childhood cancer researchers and kids fighting cancer during National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Sharing online video will provide the opportunity to fund 1,000 hours of research

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 4, 2013 [PRNewswire](#)/ -- Today's superheroes don't drive a Batmobile or fly through the air faster than the speed of light. Their capes are white lab coats and their superpower is the ability to cure. They are men and women researching cures for childhood cancer - the leading cause of death by disease in children under the age of 15 in the U.S.[1]- which is vastly underfunded[2].

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please click:<http://www.multivu.com/mnr/59532-northwestern-mutual-launches-heroes-for-cure-campaign-fight-child-cancer>

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20130904/MM72450>)

Starting today, Northwestern Mutual is giving consumers the chance to honor childhood cancer researchers and kids who are fighting cancer, by raising research funds through a new Facebook campaign, [Heroes for a Cure](#). The Northwestern Mutual campaign aims to raise \$50,000 - equal to 1,000 hours of research - in September, which is National Childhood Cancer Month.

Consumers can visit Northwestern Mutual's [Facebook](#) page to watch and share the [Heroes for a Cure video](#) that honors two researchers, Michael Hogarty, MD, and John Maris, MD, their teams, and two of the children they are helping, eight-year-old Brooke Mulford and 10-year-old Tony Salerno. Dr. Hogarty, pediatric oncologist, and Dr. Maris, director, Center for Childhood Cancer Research, are working on breakthrough cures at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

For each Facebook share the video receives, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation will donate \$2 to nonprofit Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF), up to \$50,000 to fund research. ALSF supports research for new treatments and cures for childhood cancer, encouraging and empowering others to get involved and make a difference for children with cancer.

"Hearing the stories of children like Tony and Brooke facing such a devastating illness can leave anyone feeling helpless. What we're doing is offering a small way that each of us can show our support, with the goal of finding cures," said John Kordsmeier, president of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "These dollars are desperately needed to fund research. This campaign is about spreading awareness for this tremendous need as well as funding research vital to saving the lives of children."

One in 300 children will be diagnosed with cancer by the time they're 20 years old[3], yet childhood cancer research and support services are vastly underfunded[4]. A forthcoming survey of childhood cancer researchers, commissioned by Northwestern Mutual and scheduled to be released in mid-September, reveals that more than half (51 percent) would like to dedicate more time than they currently are spending on finding better treatments/cures for childhood cancer; however, nine out of 10 (91 percent) say lack of research funds is the top obstacle.

"We're at this unprecedented time in which we have the ability to discover new targets and new treatments; but when the resources aren't there, it's a major problem," said Dr. Hogarty. "What these kids can go through while still having optimism in their lives makes us work even harder."

Heroes Tell their Stories to Raise Awareness and Funds

Tony and Brooke were both diagnosed with high-risk, stage four neuroblastoma, a cancerous tumor that grows in the nerve tissue of infants and very young children.

Tony was barely three years old when he complained of a tummy ache and received his diagnosis. He had surgery to remove the tumor in his abdominal cavity. Tony endured five rounds of chemotherapy and numerous other treatments, including T-cell rescue and two stem cell transplants. Tony is currently in remission.

Brooke was only four years old when she experienced severe leg pain and was misdiagnosed. Once Brooke was correctly diagnosed with cancer, it had spread through every bone in her body and approximately 80 percent of her bone marrow. Brooke has had multiple procedures, including 12 days of radiation to her skull, her abdomen and both femurs. Brooke continues the fight of her life with the help of Dr. Maris.

The [Heroes for a Cure](#) video also features Tony and Brooke's family members, including Brooke's mom, Amy Mulford. "I know the researchers are fighting so hard every day to try and find cures," said Mulford. "I hope there's a cure in the very near future. I need it now -- Brooke's diagnosis is terminal."

Our Commitment to the Cause

Northwestern Mutual's Childhood Cancer Program is committed to accelerating the search for cures for childhood cancers and providing support for families battling the disease. The program launched in July 2012 and has impacted more than 1,500 individuals touched by childhood cancer, funded more than 15,000 hours of research and helped 200 families travel for childhood cancer treatments. Through a variety of initiatives, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation and fundraising efforts led by financial representatives across the country has contributed more than \$1.5 million for the cause.

Heroes for a Cure will support Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's unique approach to funding childhood cancer research - working directly with doctors, researchers and nurses to identify the specific challenges they face, and distribute grants to speed up the process of bringing the most promising life-saving treatments to seriously ill children.

To learn more about the Childhood Cancer Program, please visit www.nmfoundation.com.

About Northwestern Mutual

Northwestern Mutual is among the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2013 according to FORTUNE® magazine and has helped clients achieve financial security for more than 156 years. As a mutual company with \$1.4 trillion of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual has no shareholders. The company focuses solely and directly on its clients and seeks to deliver consistent and dependable value to them over time.

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, WI, and its subsidiaries. Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer a holistic approach to financial security solutions including: life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, annuities, investment products, and advisory products and services. Subsidiaries include Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC, broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company, limited purpose federal savings bank; Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company; and Russell Investments.

About the Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation – the largest corporate foundation in Wisconsin – is to build strong, vibrant communities that serve as a legacy to future generations. The Foundation's giving is designed to create an impact on the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. In fiscal year 2013, the Foundation will contribute \$16.9 million to nonprofit organizations across the country.

About Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of cancer patient Alexandra "Alex" Scott (1996-2004). In 2000, 4-year-old Alex announced that she wanted to hold a lemonade stand to raise money to help find a cure for all children with cancer. Since Alex held that first stand, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a national fundraising movement, complete with thousands of supporters across the country carrying on her legacy of hope. To date, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 charity, has raised more than \$60 million toward fulfilling Alex's dream of finding a cure, funding over 300 pediatric cancer research projects nationally. For more information on Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, visit www.AlexsLemonade.org.

[1] <http://seer.cancer.gov/publications/childhood/>

[2] <http://www.cancer.gov/researchandfunding/snapshots/pediatric>

[3] <http://seer.cancer.gov/publications/childhood/introduction.pdf>

[4] <http://www.cancer.gov/researchandfunding/snapshots/pediatric>

SOURCE Northwestern Mutual Foundation

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