



## **Joe Andruzzi Foundation Announces Inaugural Gratitude Gala to Support Cancer Patients and Families This Holiday Season**

*Gratitude takes the spotlight as New England sports stars and celebrities raise funds alongside three-time Super Bowl champion and cancer survivor Joe Andruzzi; Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh to serve as keynote speaker*

**Mansfield, Mass. (October 2, 2014)** – The Joe Andruzzi Foundation (JAF) will host its inaugural Gratitude Gala at Gillette Stadium on November 24, 2014. Previously called the New England Celebrities Tackle Cancer Gala, which has taken place the last six years, this evening of philanthropy and fun will celebrate seven years of successful fundraising by highlighting an attitude of gratitude to Foundation supporters.

The Joe Andruzzi Foundation is committed to providing help, hope, and a reason to smile for cancer patients and their families by contributing financial and emotional support when it is needed most. The Gratitude Gala directly supports the Foundation's financial assistance program, through which the Foundation provides grants that help patient families with everyday expenses, including rent and mortgage payments, utility bills and more.

Joe Andruzzi, three-time Super Bowl champion, cancer survivor and co-founder of JAF with his wife Jen, will rally Foundation supporters, professional athletes and New England celebrities to raise funds for the Foundation. In 2013, the Gala raised a record-breaking \$700,000, enabling the non-profit to provide financial assistance to more cancer patients and their families than ever before. Funds from the evening also benefited pediatric brain cancer research at Boston Children's Hospital.

Individual Gala tickets are available exclusively at [joeandruzzifoundation.org](http://joeandruzzifoundation.org). Information regarding a limited number of remaining sponsorship packages is also available on our website, or by contacting the Foundation directly at 508-261-0630 or [events@joeandruzzifoundation.org](mailto:events@joeandruzzifoundation.org).

This year, the Foundation will welcome The Honorable Mayor of Boston Martin J. Walsh, who will deliver the event's keynote address. Diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Burkitt's lymphoma at age seven, the same cancer diagnosis Joe Andruzzi faced seven years ago, Mayor Walsh will speak to the challenges that face cancer patients and their families and the importance of support from organizations like the Joe Andruzzi Foundation.

"During treatment, sometimes the only thing that can give you hope is a smile, a hug, or a simple hello from someone who knows what you're going through," said Mayor Walsh. "I found support and strength through my own battle with cancer, but positivity is such a vital piece in overcoming life's challenges. Not just for cancer patients, but for everyone -- it's an incredible thing that provides so much hope to our community."

The Andruzzis, who dealt with fighting the disease firsthand as Joe battled non-Hodgkin's Burkitt's lymphoma in 2007, draw from their personal experience to fulfill JAF's mission to stay upbeat in the face of the disease while providing critical financial and emotional support. This year not only marks the seventh year of a gala fundraiser, but also Joe's seventh year of being cancer-free, providing yet another reason to show their thankfulness to the continued support of the community.

"Cancer affects everyone, and every year the community becomes more aware of the positive impact the Foundation makes in the lives of those fighting this disease," said Joe Andruzzi. "This night is the

Foundation's way of saying 'thank you' to the hundreds of supporters who have paid it forward with their time and resources. We want to honor all of the supporters, celebrities, patient families and survivors who generously donate year after year, and who continue to inspire others to give back with a smile and attitude of thankfulness."

The Gratitude Gala, set against the dramatic backdrop of the Patriots' home field, will feature a meet-and-greet cocktail hour with celebrities and athletes, as well as a three-course dinner and speaking program with special guest speakers including Mayor Walsh. Throughout the night, live and silent auctions will give attendees the opportunity to win priceless sports memorabilia, in-demand Boston sports tickets, luxury dining, entertainment, spa and travel packages. The New England Patriots Charitable Foundation will also receive JAF's 2014 (Up)Beat Award for their dedication to charitable organizations.

The Foundation's annual Gala has in the past been supported by local athletes and celebrities including: Troy Brown, Marcus Cannon, Kevin Faulk, Steve Gregory, Rob Gronkowski, Matt Light, Logan Mankins, Jerod Mayo, Devin McCourty, Rob Ninkovich, Nate Solder and Sebastian Vollmer; Patriots owner Robert Kraft; comedian Lenny Clarke; Dropkick Murphys lead Ken Casey; Boston Bruins star forward Milan Lucic, and many others. The event will be emceed by former New England Patriot quarterback Scott Zolak.

Since it began in 2008, the Joe Andruzzi Foundation has provided grants to more than 2,300 cancer patients and their families, assisting with rent, mortgage and utility payments so caregivers and patients can focus on treatment. Additionally, the Foundation has donated more than \$500,000 to Dr. Mark Kieran at Boston Children's Hospital to help fund pediatric brain cancer research. The Foundation also sponsors upbeat outings for patients and families, and Joe Andruzzi is a regular visitor at Boston Children's Hospital and other cancer facilities.

For more information on the Joe Andruzzi Foundation and the Gratitude Gala, please visit [www.joeandruzzifoundation.org](http://www.joeandruzzifoundation.org). To learn more about the Joe Andruzzi Foundation, please visit the Foundation's [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

### **About The Joe Andruzzi Foundation**

The Joe Andruzzi Foundation was founded in 2008 to help cancer patients and their families make critical mortgage, rent and utility payments during financially-challenging times, and to fund pediatric brain cancer research. It also provides patients with social and emotional support and acts as a general resource for families. Joe Andruzzi, a former offensive guard with the New England Patriots, was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Burkitt's lymphoma in 2007 and was treated at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital. Disease-free less than a year later, Joe dedicated his life to supporting other cancer patients and funding life-saving research. The Joe Andruzzi Foundation is Joe and his wife Jen's second philanthropic effort; in 2003, they started the C.J. Buckley Brain Cancer Research Fund at Children's Hospital Boston in memory of C.J. Buckley, a young man with an inoperable brain tumor who touched their hearts before losing his battle in 2002. The fund supports much-needed, innovative research into the molecular nature of pediatric brain tumors, novel treatment therapies and alternatives to multiple surgeries. The aim is to contribute to the growing knowledge base of available brain cancer cures, making treatment more widely available to all.

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