



## Joe Andruzzi

### *President*

Born in Brooklyn, NY, and raised in Staten Island, Joe Andruzzi played football at Tottenville High School, where he was a Division II all American during his junior and senior years. He went on to play college football at [Southern Connecticut State University](#) in [New Haven, Connecticut](#), where he majored in special education.

In 1997, Joe was picked up as an undrafted free agent by the Green Bay Packers, and in February 1998 he was allocated by the Packers to play football in Scotland for NFL Europe. He was released from the Packers after three seasons and picked up as an offensive guard by the New England Patriots in 2000, where he played five seasons and earned three Super Bowl rings.

In 2001, Joe and his wife Jen met C.J. Buckley, a young man with an inoperable brain tumor. C.J. and his family became extended family members to the Andruzzis and his passing left a hole in their hearts. Always driven to help others in need, Joe helped launch the C.J. Buckley Brain Cancer Research Fund at Boston Children's Hospital. In recognition of his contributions, he received the Ed Block Courage Award in 2002 and the first Ron Burton Community Service Award in 2003.

Joe's philanthropy didn't stop there. As a brother to three New York firefighters, who were all involved in the September 11 attacks, he organized a trip for 100 New York firefighters to attend a Patriots vs. Jets game at Gillette Stadium in 2002. Joe, his father, and brothers were the honorary game captains.

In February 2005, Joe became a free agent and was signed by the Cleveland Browns, for whom he played two seasons. But on May 30, 2007, Joe was diagnosed with an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin's Burkitt's lymphoma, predicted to double in size within 24 hours. His playing career was over. And his family quickly relocated back to New England, where he underwent chemotherapy treatments at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital. Joe fought the disease with strength and courage, receiving his last treatment on August 6, 2007, before recovering for a year at home.

Since then, Joe has remained cancer-free, and lives a healthy life with Jen, their five children (including their youngest son, C.J., named after the late C.J. Buckley) and two dogs. Together, Joe and Jen run the Joe Andruzzi Foundation, which works to lift cancer's burden by providing financial assistance to patients and families. Reflecting the Andruzzis' longstanding commitment to pediatric brain cancer research at Boston Children's Hospital, the Joe Andruzzi Foundation also funds much needed innovative research into the nature of pediatric brain tumors. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised more than \$11 million, assisted more than 8,000 families struggling with cancer and donated more than \$850,000 to Dr. Mark Kieran at Boston Children's Hospital to help fund pediatric brain cancer research.

In 2012, the Foundation unveiled its new (Up)Beat Cancer initiative, a rallying cry to inspire patients to live joyfully during cancer treatment. Emphasizing fun and humor, the motto grew out of Joe's personal experiences meeting impressive patients over the years, including many brave children who didn't let their disease affect their spirits and optimism.

In 2014, Joe was the recipient of an honorary degree from Salem State University's College of Arts and Sciences and School of Education for his commitment to helping cancer patients and families throughout the region.

In his spare time, Joe is a regular visitor at Children's and the Jimmy Fund Clinic, often bringing former and current Patriots players along to brighten the days of patients undergoing treatment. Through patient outings and events, coupled with the Foundation's financial assistance, Joe works to bring joy to patients and families, providing fun, hope and inspiration.