



The ALS Association
National Office

Media Release

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The ALS Association Teams with Major League Baseball in '4♦ALS Awareness' Initiative

'4♦ALS Awareness' to Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Lou Gehrig's Farewell Speech on July 4th

CALABASAS HILLS, Calif. (February 3, 2009) -- Major League Baseball will raise awareness and financial support for organizations leading the fight against ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), otherwise known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," with a new charitable campaign, "4♦ALS Awareness," Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig announced today.

MLB is working with four leading organizations - The ALS Association, ALS TDI, MDA/Augie's Quest and Project A.L.S. - whose primary goal is to find a cure for ALS. The initiative will culminate on July 4, 2009, which is the 70th anniversary of Lou Gehrig's famous farewell speech at Yankee Stadium. ALS destroys the nerve cells controlling muscles, ultimately causing complete paralysis. Average life expectancy is three to five years after diagnosis.

"We are honored and pleased to have the opportunity to join these four important organizations in an attempt to make progress in the fight against ALS, a disease that is associated with one of the greatest players in baseball history," said Selig. "Lou Gehrig displayed tremendous courage and strength in the face of a debilitating illness, and his speech 70 years ago still stands as one of the defining moments in baseball history."

Following is an excerpt from Gehrig's famous speech:

"For the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans."

On July 4, 2009, each home team will host an on-field reading of Gehrig's Farewell speech during the 7th Inning Stretch. All players will wear a "4♦ALS" patch on their chest and MLB will promote the effort in a variety of ways, including in-stadium promotions. In addition, MLB.com will conduct an online auction to raise funds for the cause, and Major League Baseball will

continue to work with the four organizations to identify additional opportunities to raise funds and awareness.

The ALS Association is a non-profit organization fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease on every front. Through global research, providing assistance for people with ALS via a nationwide network of chapters, coordinating multidisciplinary care through certified clinical care centers, and fostering government partnerships, The Association builds hope and enhances quality of life while aggressively searching for new treatments and a cure.

"The ALS Association is proud to partner with Major League Baseball and our ALS organization team members in this historic initiative to raise awareness and resources in the fight against ALS," said Allen L. Finkelstein, chair of The ALS Association National Board of Trustees. "The '4♦ALS Awareness' campaign provides renewed hope that Lou Gehrig's greatest accomplishment will not be measured by statistics, but by the lives saved in his name."

The ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) has a single mission-to develop therapeutics that slow and stop ALS. With close to a \$12 million annual budget, the nonprofit Institute has a 30 person research team working aggressively in its research center. ALS TDI is fulfilling its urgent mission by applying the best practices of a biotechnology company on behalf of today's patients.

"ALS is a crisis. It is an unmet medical need. It has been labeled an incurable disease, but with the technology and expertise available now we believe this problem can and will be solved. This is exactly what is happening in our lab today. We are grateful to be part of this initiative and encourage everyone to get involved in the '4♦ALS Awareness' campaign," said Sean Scott, president of ALS TDI.

Augie's Quest, MDA's ALS research initiative, is an aggressive, cure-driven effort singularly focused on finding treatments and cures for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). MDA funds over \$23 million annually and more than \$250 million since its inception.

"Major League Baseball is making a huge difference in the fight against Lou Gehrig's disease through this July 4 effort," said Augie Nieto, founder and chief inspiration officer for MDA's Augie's Quest. "Both in terms of public awareness and fundraising, the MLB contribution is significant and has a profound impact on the lives of people living with this devastating disease."

The mission of Project A.L.S. is to create a new paradigm for neurodegenerative disease research. They identify the world's leading researchers and clinicians and mobilize them to work together as teams in the areas of Genetics, Drug Discovery, Stem Cells, and Disease Pathways. Each project they fund is vetted and approved by its research advisory board. Project A.L.S. has raised over \$38 million to fund these efforts.

"Project A.L.S. is thrilled to partner with Major League Baseball and the ALS Community to forward research that will result in effective treatments and a cure. This is Lou Gehrig's legacy," said Valerie Estess, founder and director of research of Project A.L.S.

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