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SAN DIEGO FATHER HOPES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF MILITARY CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Local father of child with autism, Sam Felsenfeld, is on a mission to improve the lives of military children with autism

March 11, 2011 - SAN DIEGO, CA Sam Felsenfeld, father of a seven-year old son with autism, is on a mission to help lighten the load many US military families carry with serving the country and seeking autism care and services for their children.



Felsenfeld, who ran 61 marathons in 1 year in support of his son Jack, is now running in the ACT Today! for Military Families 5k/10k on April 2nd in support of military children with autism. “Jack is severely autistic,” says Felsenfeld. “I also love our troops — they lay it all on the line so I can run around enjoying freedom. I come from a military family (mother was an officer in the Air Force for 12 years, father was in the Army for 2, and grandfather was in the military during WWII). I believe raising awareness of the needs of military families impacted by autism is extremely important to bring about positive changes.”

According to Department of Defense data, it is estimated that 1 in 88 military children have autism. Autism is a complex neurological disorder. Research shows, in the treatment of autism, early intervention and intensive behavioral therapy are imperative to success.

April is Autism Awareness Month and the Month of the Military Child. Felsenfeld is hoping the San Diego and surrounding communities will join him in the **ACT Today! for Military Families 5k/10k Run and ONEHOPE Family Festival**, benefiting military children with autism. The event will occur on **Saturday, April 2, 2011 in San Diego on Fiesta Island**.

“My goal is to be a part of a successful event and make a difference in the lives of military families. A lot of people are going to come together to make this a great race that helps good people, and I’m be proud to have a part in that.”

“One percent of America may be fighting our wars, but 100% of America can help support their families here at home. We are truly inspired by Sam Felsenfeld and others like him, who are joining us in this mission,” says ACT Today!’s Executive Director Nancy Alspaugh-Jackson. “Their generous support of the cause and their passion is amazing. We are confident the entire community will come out and enjoy a fun-filled day that will build autism awareness, and raise funds to help military children with autism get the necessary tools they need to reach their highest potential.”

ACT Today! for Military Families (ATMF), is a national nonprofit campaign that works to improve awareness and delivery of effective autism services, as well as provides financial assistance to military families to help defray out-of-pocket costs associated with autism treatments and other quality of life programs. ATMF is a specially funded campaign through ACT Today! (Autism Care and Treatment Today!), a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to raise awareness and provide treatment services and support to families to help their children with autism achieve their full potential.

“One of the most recent ATMF grant recipients is the six-year old daughter of a retired disabled Army veteran. ATMF was able to provide a \$5,000 treatment grant to help the family continue her ABA therapy program, a recommended treatment for autism. With the help of ABA therapy, this beautiful little girl has made tremendous gains and is now in a typical first grade classroom with her peers. Its stories like these that keep me going,” says ATMF Campaign Director and Marine wife Karen Driscoll.

Actors Mark Christopher Lawrence (“Terminator: 2”, “Pursuit of Happyness”, TV sitcom “Chuck”) and Kyle Massey (“Cory in the House”, “Dancing with the Stars”, 2010 Runner Up) will co-host the ONEHOPE Family Festival.

Confirmed celebrities (as of March 9, 2011) include: Actor Nolin Gould (“Modern Family”), Actress Julianna Rose (“Prom”, “Justin Bieber, Never Say Never”, “Pretty Little Liars”), Actress Jennessa Rose (“Crazy Stupid Love”, “Ponyo”), Actor Zach Callison (“Hannah Montana”), Actress Danika Yarosh (“Billy Elliot”), Actor Derek Bloom (“Kids on the Porch”, “iCarly”, “Victorious”), SpongeBob, Actor Doug Brochu (“Sonny with a Chance”), Actor Chris Brochu (“Lemonade Mouth” and “Soul Surfer”), Actress Joey King (“Ramona and Beezus” and “Battle LA”), Actor Aedin Mincks (“Faster”), Weathercaster Kerstin Lindquist (ABC 10), News Anchor Steve Atkinson (ABC 10), Actor Bobby Soto (“Lie to Me”), Actress Haley Pullos (“General Hospital”), and Actress Joey King (“Ramona and Beezus”).

Performers include: Disney stars 2-U-Neek, American Idol’s Luke Edgemon, Canadian breakout artist Ricky J, international artist Won-G, HBO’s award-winning artists Miracle Project Kids, Nickelodeon’s “Victorious” Austin Anderson, hip-hop dancers The Bronx Boys/Odori 73, and Graceland Mafia.

Corporate sponsors of the event (as of March 9, 2011) include: ONEHOPE Wine, Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD), Ralphs, Butterfly Effects, Legoland California Resort, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Wells Fargo, Allied American University, Granite Investment Group, ABC News 10, and Sophie@103.7.

The ONEHOPE Family Festival is free for all ages, and will feature resource and wellness booths, food, live performances, celebrity appearances, beer garden and more.

For more information and to register for the ATMF 5k/10k Run, visit: www.acttodayformilitaryfamilies.org.

About Autism Care and Treatment Today (ACT Today!):

ACT Today! is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness and provide treatment services and support to families to help their children with autism achieve their full potential. Recognizing the extraordinary challenges military families experience (waging a battle on two fronts - one for their country and another for their children), ACT Today! for Military Families (ATMF) is a dedicated fund to assist military families impacted by autism. ATMF works to improve awareness and delivery of effective autism services, and provides financial assistance to military families to help defray out-of-pocket costs associated with autism treatments and other quality of life programs.

For more information about the ATMF 5k/10k Run and ONEHOPE Family Festival, visit: www.acttodayformilitaryfamilies.org.