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CANCER PATIENT AT ST. LUKE'S-ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL WINS MERRITT ISLAND, FL VACATION FROM "LAURA'S JOURNEYS"

Program Encourages and Facilitates Therapeutic Recreational Travel for Cancer Patients

New York, NY, April 12, 2010 – Thanks in part to the efforts of a Space Coast realtor, a 60-year-old Manhattan woman who is being treated for endometrial sarcoma won a vacation to Merritt Island, FL, recently at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York. The trip is offered through "Laura's Journeys," a philanthropic program created by Bill Parness in loving memory of his wife Laura Parness, who passed away at the age of 54 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. This marks the fifth vacation giveaway by "Laura's Journeys" since last fall.

The winner, who requested privacy, will be traveling with her friend, an ovarian cancer survivor, at the end of next month. She won accommodations for seven nights in a fully-furnished vacation home on Merritt Island, approximately five miles from Cocoa Beach and nearby Kennedy Space Center. The accommodations were donated by Pytha Realty Group of Merritt Island, http://www.pytharealty.com. Pytha plans to donate at least one additional week to Laura's Journeys later this year, and Sunrise Diner will provide meal vouchers for that time period as well. Originally, the co-owners of Pytha Realty became acquainted with Laura's Journeys through the efforts of greek-dream-rentals.com their friend in Greece, Natalie Ashley of, who recently orchestrated a one-week trip to Athens for another Laura's Journeys contest winner.

"My friend and I are so excited and grateful for this opportunity to travel to Merritt Island," said the winner. "I'm thrilled to be going on vacation to such a beautiful spot. I can't thank 'Laura's Journeys' enough for such a generous gift."

"Laura's Journeys" is a program designed to encourage cancer patients and their significant others to travel, whether it is a weekend stay at a nearby Bed & Breakfast, a week-long cruise, or trips such as this or to Greece. Laura's Journeys is donating airfare for the winner from New York to Orlando, travel insurance, car rental, meals and sightseeing. Additionally, thanks to the efforts of Pytha Realty, the Sunrise Diner of Cocoa Beach will be donating vouchers to be applied to meals throughout the week. Pytha is actively seeking donations from other local businesses.

"We are thrilled that, thanks to the generosity of Pytha Realty and local businesses, the winner and her guest will be able to enjoy a week in a stunning, fully equipped vacation home in a part of Florida that offers something for everyone," said Mr. Parness, a resident of Aberdeen, N.J. "I'm sure that the winner of this trip will derive the same restorative benefits from travel that Laura got during the five-plus years she was being treated."

Laura Parness was a patient of Gabriel A. Sara, M.D., Medical Director of the Chemotherapy Infusion Suite and Executive Director of the Patient Services Initiative at Continuum Cancer Centers of New York, located at Roosevelt Hospital. Dr. Sara is a strong advocate for therapeutic travel for his patients.

"We want patients to dream and to remember that cancer and chemotherapy cannot stop them from being who they want to be and all they can be," said Dr. Sara. "Having a winning ticket for a prospective trip in their hand triggers enthusiasm and lifts their spirit."

In addition to trip giveaways, "Laura's Journeys" offers tips for traveling while undergoing treatment for cancer, money-saving advice, and important guidance such as finding a doctor who is supportive of travel, setting realistic expectations, taking out travel insurance policies that don't exclude pre-existing conditions, reaching out to airlines and front desks at hotels for special requests, and advising patients to always travel with a doctor's note.

For more travel tips or to donate, please visit www.laurasjourneys.org.

Established in 2009 in loving memory of Laura Parness, "Laura's Journeys" is a support program for cancer patients at Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan and other institutions within the Continuum Health Partners network. The program is specifically designed to encourage and facilitate recreational travel for the patient along with their spouse/partner or other family members/friends.

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