

Immediate Release

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**FOUNDATION THAT HELPS CYSTIC FIBROSIS PATIENTS
TO RECEIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

PITTSBURGH – The Muriel’s Breath of Life Foundation will receive a Community Service Award given by the Pennsylvania Association for Justice. Pittsburgh trial lawyer Paul Lagnese will accept the award on behalf of the foundation, which he and his family established. The foundation provides financial assistance grants to patients undergoing treatment at the Antonio J. & Janet Palumbo Cystic Fibrosis Center-Adult Program, which is part of the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

The award will be presented on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 at The Westin Convention Center at the quarterly meeting of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice (PAJ), the state’s largest trial lawyer association. In announcing the award, PAJ President Scott B. Cooper, Esq. said: “We are proud to honor the Muriel’s Breath of Life Foundation for the vital assistance it provides to adults and children needing treatment for Cystic Fibrosis, and their families, in Western Pennsylvania.”

The foundation is named after Muriel Lagnese, Paul’s sister-in-law, who was diagnosed in her early forties with Cystic Fibrosis, an uncommon genetic disease affecting the respiratory system which is typically identified earlier in childhood. While Muriel was undergoing treatment, she got to know other patients, including ones facing financial difficulties, according to Lagnese. Muriel battled the disease for six years, but succumbed in 2009.

“The foundation has had an immediate and profound impact,” according to Carol Ashby, Senior Major Gift Officer with the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation. Ashby continued,

“thanks to the phenomenal generosity of Muriel’s Breath of Life over 400 grants have been given to families of children and adults with Cystic Fibrosis.”

To date the organization has given \$85,000 to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh since 2010 through money raised at three picnics, a silent auction, and golf raffle, and from the efforts of Lagnese’s father Joe Lagnese, Sr., who wrote a cookbook and even produced a music CD that are sold on the foundation’s web site, www.murielsbreathoflife.org.

Grants from the foundation go directly to patients or their families for such items as medication, equipment, transportation, hospital living expenses, and household expenses. Social workers at the Palumbo Center determine the grant distribution on an individual basis. “The financial barrier could be the cost of a tank of gas or an unpaid bill,” according to Paul, a partner in law firm of Berger & Lagnese, LLC, Pittsburgh.

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