

Celine Dion, Caesars Entertainment and AEG Live Team Up for Special Evening with Children's Hospital Boston to Support "Play Without Pain: Children's Sickle Cell Benefit"

Legendary Entertainer Pays Tribute to Cause With Touching Benefit Event; More Than \$1 Million Raised for Sickle Cell Disease Research

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LAS VEGAS, Jan. 17, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Doctors at Children's Hospital Boston are just another step closer to securing a cure for sickle cell disease thanks to a little help from some superstar friends. More than \$1 million was raised in support of their research efforts Sunday, January 15 during the "Play Without Pain: Children's Sickle Cell Benefit," a partnership with international megastar Celine Dion, Caesars Entertainment, AEG Live and Children's Hospital Boston. Held at Caesars Palace, the evening included a performance of Celine Dion's glamorous show directed by Grammy Awards producer Ken Ehrlich, including a touching tribute to sickle cell victims during her rendition of Billy Joel's "Lullabye."

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please visit: <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/54153-celine-dion-play-without-pain-children-s-sickle-cell-benefit>

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"As a parent, I've been touched by the stories that were shared with me about the impact sickle cell anemia has on millions of children around the world," said Dion. "We know that doctors with Children's Hospital Boston are very close to discovering life-saving treatments for these children, and I wanted to help. No child should have to live a life filled with pain and, hopefully, tonight's benefit show moves us one step closer to ending their suffering."

Sickle cell disease is a debilitating condition that causes excruciating pain, organ failure, stroke and early death. It is the most common inherited blood disorder in the United States, affecting 100,000 Americans and the number of sufferers is in the millions worldwide. Affected populations are mainly of African descent, but the disease also strikes individuals of Hispanic, Mediterranean and Caribbean heritage. And its treatment is costly: an estimated \$1.1 billion a year in the U.S. alone.

"Even though sickle cell is one of the most common inherited disorders, research on the disease is historically under-funded," said Gary Fleisher, M.D., Physician-in-Chief at Children's Hospital Boston. "The team at Children's is making important progress toward developing new gene therapies that could help millions of sickle cell sufferers across the globe. We are incredibly grateful to Celine Dion and Gary Loveman, with Caesars Entertainment, for helping us work toward our fundraising goals and inching us ever closer to achieving a cure."

Researchers at Children's Hospital Boston have found a genetic switch that overrides the sickle cell defect and have identified the gene that controls the unhealthy form of hemoglobin, the protein responsible for sickle cell disease. Treatments to flip the switch promise to deliver lifelong relief. The new therapies would turn off the unhealthy form of hemoglobin and turn a healthy form back on. These therapies promise to reverse disease rather than simply treat symptoms.

"Children's physician-researchers have done what others have tried to do for decades; they've found a way to override the sickle cell defect," said Gary Loveman, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Caesars Entertainment and a member of Children's Hospital Boston Board of Trustees. "I am pleased that tonight's benefit has placed these doctors on a path toward delivering life-saving treatments to patients and proud that Caesars could play a part in helping meet their goals. I hope that tonight's benefit will inspire others to join me, Celine and the doctors of Children's Hospital Boston in the fight to find a cure."

Prior to Celine's benefit performance guests were treated to dinner at Restaurant Guy Savoy, where they enjoyed a menu personally created by the acclaimed French chef who flew in from France especially to participate in the benefit. Guests enjoyed Savoy's signature artichoke soup, turbot and black truffle mouselline, beef Wellington and, for dessert, chocolate fondant with chicoree sauce. Guests were also treated to an exclusive meet and greet with Celine Dion prior to the show.

The benefit concluded with a VIP cocktail reception at PURE Nightclub featuring a special performance by Las Vegas-based entertainer A.J. Green, a 19-year old sickle cell patient. Green's performance at PURE included hits from his debut album *Whatever You Need* including "Jump," "I'll Be There" and "Superstar," a Luther Vandross cover. The reception was sponsored by Angel Management Group and Southern Wine & Spirits.

SOURCE Caesars Entertainment

<http://caesars.mediaroom.com/2012-01-17-Celine-Dion-Caesars-Entertainment-and-AEG-Live-Team-Up-for-Special-Evening-with-Childrens-Hospital-Boston-to-Support-Play-Without-Pain-Childrens-Sickle-Cell-Benefit>