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**POWERFUL HBO DOCUMENTARY MOVES NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS OWNER TO PLEDGE UP TO \$500,000 TO PROGERIA RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

**In an effort to raise \$1 million, Robert Kraft will match public contributions to the Foundation from now until October 23, the 17<sup>th</sup> birthday of *LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM* subject, Sam Berns.**

**New York, NY (October 10, 2013)** -- Inspired at a screening of a new HBO Documentary film, [\*LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM\*](#), the Chairman and CEO of the NFL's New England Patriots on Tuesday pledged up to half a million dollars to The Progeria Research Foundation and a clinical trial that could lead to a treatment for the rare and fatal disease. Robert Kraft announced the pledge at the New York premiere of the film, which explores the life of Sam Berns, a 16-year-old boy with Progeria and son of The Progeria Research Foundation co-founders. To kick off a fundraising drive, Kraft said he will match every donation to the Progeria Research Foundation,, up to \$500,000, from now until Sam's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 23. If the match is maximized, the Foundation will celebrate Sam's birthday knowing they raised \$1 million to help fund the next clinical study in their pursuit to find a cure for Progeria. Donations can be made at the Progeria Research Foundation [website](#).

Directed by Academy Award-winning filmmakers Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine, *LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM* will debut on Monday, October 21 on HBO at 9 p.m. EST/PST. The film spotlights Sam's and his family's relentless pursuit of a treatment and cure for Progeria, while chronicling the teenager's typical schedule of high school, friends and family.

"I have fallen in love with Sam and I am sure that sentiment is shared by anyone who has ever spent time with him," said Kraft. "*Life According to Sam* is an amazing and powerful film that will introduce Sam, his family and his story to a national audience. Sam is a star and what his parents have achieved in their search to find a cure is incredibly inspirational. Together, they are championing a cause that has already positively impacted the lives of children around the world. This is a must-see film. It will make you laugh. It will make you cry. And, most importantly, I think it will motivate people to want to do more to help."

"As filmmakers, you hope that your work will move people to make a difference. We are honored to tell Sam and his family's story, and this pledge by Robert Kraft is beyond exciting," said Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine.

*LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM* is a highly personal and life-affirming journey championed by the presence of Sam himself. Funny, perceptive and fiercely intelligent, Sam is the catalyst of his parents' relentless drive to discover a medical breakthrough that may one day shed light on unlocking the aging process in us all.

In 1998 Dr. Leslie Gordon and Dr. Scott Berns learned that their two-year-old son, Sam, had Progeria. With little known about the disease at the time, they were told there was no treatment or cure. However, they refused to accept the diagnosis as a final verdict. Dr. Gordon and Dr. Berns founded The Progeria Research Foundation to drive Progeria research and to serve as a resource for children with Progeria and their families worldwide.

Progeria, also known as Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS), is a rare genetic disease characterized by an appearance of accelerated aging in children. Currently there are fewer than 250 children in the world living with this condition. All children with Progeria die of the same heart disease that affects millions of normal aging adults (atherosclerosis), but instead of occurring at 60 or 70 years of age, these children may suffer heart attacks and strokes as early as age five, with the average age of death at 13 years.

In *LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM*, viewers see 11 years of breakthrough research, driven by Sam's parents, which led to the first experimental drug trial for Sam and 28 other children from around the world.

Since its premiere in January 2013 at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival, *LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM* has been honored with a number of awards. The film was selected for a "Best of the Fest" special screening at the AFI Docs Festival in Washington, DC, the Audience Award Winner at the Nantucket, Newburyport, Woods Hole and Martha's Vineyard film festivals, Best Storytelling award at Nantucket and Best Feature Documentary at the Rhode Island international film festival.

What people are saying about *Life According to Sam*:

"Powerful film on life, love, hope, family, medicine"

"When I grow up I want to be as wise as Sam and as positive as Leslie"

"...The sweetest, life-affirming film ... stunning and thought-provoking"

### **About The Progeria Research Foundation (PRF)**

The Progeria Research Foundation (PRF) was established in 1999 to find the cause, treatment and cure for Progeria – a rapid aging disease that causes children to die from heart disease or stroke at an average age of 13 years. Over the past 14 years, research conducted in partnership with PRF has identified the gene that causes Progeria and possible treatments. PRF funded and coordinated the first-ever Progeria clinical trial to test the farnesyltransferase inhibitor (FTI) lonafarnib, which is featured in the film. PRF is currently funding a clinical trial in which children with Progeria receive FTI plus two additional medications, hoping the 3-drug combination will slow the progression of Progeria. PRF continues to identify more children who can benefit from the programs and services that it provides while helping advance research towards treatment and cure. To learn more about Progeria and what you can do to help, please visit [www.progeriaresearch.org](http://www.progeriaresearch.org).

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