ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” Helps Family Coping with Primary Immunodeficiency Disease

The Cerdas are Active Volunteers for the Immune Deficiency Foundation

Las Vegas and Towson, Md. – May 5, 2009 – Devastated by medical bills and a mold-ridden home that threatened their lives, Terri Cerda and her two young daughters, all three of whom are diagnosed with Combined Immune Deficiency Disease (CIDD), will be featured on the May 10 episode of ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” CIDD is one of the most severe types of the more than 150 different primary immunodeficiency diseases (PIDD). In the U.S., there are approximately 250,000 people diagnosed with primary immunodeficiency disease and thousands more go undetected.

Because of her active role as a volunteer and advocate for the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF), a national patient organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of persons with primary immunodeficiency diseases through advocacy, education, and research, and her family’s struggle with a severe form of PIDD, IDF will be featured on ABC’s “A Better Community” Website in association with the Cerda Family episode. “A Better Community” will let viewers know how they can support IDF and make a difference in the lives of families who are affected by PIDD.

“I’m honored that our family was chosen to be on Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” said Cerda, who in addition to serving as teacher and caregiver for her two homebound daughters, is also founder of two nonprofit organizations: “Artful Hearts,” which creates murals for organizations, clinics and foundations that operate to support other children fighting life threatening medical conditions, and the “National Homebound Children's Education Foundation,” which brings together and advocates for families and children that are unable to attend school long term because of medical issues such as immune related disorders. “This new home allows my girls to play and just enjoy being kids! We’re very thankful for the joys and relief this new home has brought us, as well as the opportunity to share our story, and by doing so, build greater awareness of primary immunodeficiency diseases and the challenges we face.”

The Cerda family was chosen because of their personal, financial and health-related difficulties resulting from having PIDD, but also because of their incredible volunteer work for IDF and for families in need, both in their local community and around the country.

“Terri has been a tireless advocate for her family and others living with their illness, and she and her family deserve this happiness,” said Marcia Boyle, founder and president of the Immune Deficiency Foundation. “We are grateful to the volunteers for their help, and to “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” for giving the Cerda family greater hope, and the opportunity to highlight and bring greater awareness and understanding to their illness and our Foundation.”

Primary immunodeficiency diseases occur in patients born with an immune system that is either absent or poorly functioning. There are over 150 different types of PIDD, all caused by genetic or intrinsic defects. People with PIDD live their entire lives more susceptible to infections—enduring recurrent health problems and often developing serious and debilitating illnesses. With early diagnosis and appropriate therapies, many patients can live healthy and productive lives. Although some PIDD manifest in infancy or early childhood, some forms can occur in any decade of life.
Primary immunodeficiency diseases were a recent topic on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., where Representatives Israel (D-NY), Brady (R-TX) and Schwartz (D-PA), and Senators Kerry (D-MA) and Alexander (R-TN), introduced the Medicare Patient IVIG Access Act of 2009 (H.R. 2002 and S. 701 respectively) – meant to remedy inadequate Medicare reimbursements for intravenous immune globulin (IVIG), and allow home infusion of IVIG for Medicare beneficiaries with PIDD. IVIG is a life-saving and life-enhancing therapy for tens of thousands of patients with primary immunodeficiency diseases, including Terri Cerda and her daughters. As a result of very high co-pay costs and inadequate reimbursement by Medicare, Cerda has not been able to receive her bimonthly infusions of IVIG for over five months, leaving her to constantly live in fear of an infection that could hinder her ability to care for her daughters.

“Much like the Cerda family’s home makeover, we need an extreme makeover of policies in Washington that are blocking patient access to IVIG,” added Boyle.

**About the Immune Deficiency Foundation**
The Immune Deficiency Foundation is the national patient organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of persons with primary immunodeficiency diseases through advocacy, education, and research. To learn more about IDF, visit [www.primaryimmune.org](http://www.primaryimmune.org).

**About “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition”**
The Emmy award winning reality program “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” now in its 6th season, is produced by Endemol USA, a division of Endemol Holding. It’s executive-produced by Anthony Dominici. David Goldberg is Chairman, Endemol North America. The show airs Sundays from 8:00-9:00 p.m., ET on ABC.

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