



## Merging Lupus Organizations Raise Close to \$3 Million at First Joint Gala *From Broadway & NBC's "SMASH" - Megan Hilty Performs*

**December 1, 2015 – New York, NY –** The [Alliance for Lupus Research](#) (ALR), [Lupus Research Institute](#) (LRI) and [S.L.E. Lupus Foundation](#) celebrated their first joint dinner at the “Moving Forward Together to Fight Lupus” Gala that heralded their upcoming merger. The largest lupus fundraiser in the world raised **close to \$3 million** for innovative research that can save lives while advancing to a cure.

**Megan Hilty, the Broadway, film and singer/actress on NBC's *Smash***, brought the audience to its feet with her powerful voice and Hollywood glamour. Having starred in *9 to 5: The Musical*, and *Wicked*, Megan returns to Broadway this December in the revival of *Noises Off*.

Founder of the Alliance for Lupus Research and Chairman and CEO New York Jets, **Robert Wood “Woody” Johnson IV**, and **Bob Pittman**, Chairman and CEO, iHeartMedia, Inc. co-hosted the evening with **Richard DeScherer**, President of the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation and Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, Bloomberg L.P. and **Robert J. Ravitz**, Chairman, Lupus Research Institute. Television broadcaster, lupus advocate and devoted mom to her daughter with lupus, **Brenda Blackmon**, served as emcee with inimitable warmth and charm.

**Michelle Ifill** accepted the Corporate Leadership Award on behalf of Verizon Communications, Inc. for their long-time support of the ALR's research initiatives and contributions to the lupus community. Thousands of Verizon employees have attended ALR walkathon events across the country and have raised more than half a million dollars by going out and fundraising on their own.

The 2015 Visionary Award recognized the outstanding contributions of two extraordinary women with lupus -- S.L.E. Lupus Foundation founder **Susan Golick** and **Jennie DeScherer**, dedicated member of the Boards of the Foundation and Lupus Research Institute. Three-term Mayor of New York City, entrepreneur and philanthropist Michael R. Bloomberg presented Jennie with her Visionary Award, describing her as an “inspiring example of someone who won't let this disease get in the way of living her life to the fullest.” Presenting the award to Susan, LRI and S.L.E. Lupus Foundation Board member **Jerry Chazen** thanked her for launching the lupus movement in America 45 years ago and for her continued involvement in helping shape the organization's growth.

“Tonight we honor the champions who had the extraordinary vision and pioneering spirit to support the most novel research,” noted **Margaret G. Dowd**, President and CEO of the Lupus Research Institute and Executive Director of the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation. “We support patient-centric research which means that everything is about the patients and for the patients.”

“This year's Gala celebrates the strength of the lupus community as it brings people from ever-widening circles together to fight for a common cause,” said **Kenneth M. Farber**, President of the Alliance for Lupus Research. “The upcoming merger of the ALR with the Lupus Research Institute and S.L.E. Lupus Foundation is enormously exciting as the culmination of our ongoing collaboration and the launch of the world's largest group dedicated to advancing innovative research in lupus.”

Six hundred guests attended included **Matilda Cuomo; Edward and Arlyn Gardner; Bonnie Englehardt Lautenberg; Brett Heyman; Donald Newhouse; Joan Sarnoff; Fern and Lenard Tessler; and Carol and Michael Weisman. Governor Andrew Cuomo** was not able to attend but sent a letter of congratulations and Assistant Secretary of Health **Tracie Gardner** in his stead.

[Watch this video](#) to learn how the ALR, the LRI and the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation are ***Moving Forward Together to Fight Lupus*** with scientific discoveries that move lupus research to unprecedented levels.

Thanks go to Modern Luxury for providing guests with copies of the latest issue of *Manhattan Magazine*.

### **About the Alliance for Lupus Research**

The Alliance for Lupus Research (ALR) is a national voluntary health organization dedicated to finding better treatments and ultimately preventing and curing systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE, or lupus). The organization is based in New York City and chaired by Robert Wood Johnson IV. Since its founding in 1999, the ALR has given more money to lupus research than any non-governmental agency in the world. To date the ALR has committed nearly \$100 million to fund the most innovative and aggressive research into the cause, prevention and cure of lupus. The board of directors funds all administrative and fundraising costs, allowing one hundred percent of all donations from the public, and the proceeds of our signature grassroots fundraising program, Walk with Us to Cure Lupus, to go directly to support research programs. More information can be found at [lupusresearch.org](http://lupusresearch.org).

### **About S.L.E. Lupus Foundation and Lupus Research Institute**

Formed 45 years ago, the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation is dedicated to advancing lupus research, patient education, advocacy and awareness. In 2000 the Foundation helped launch the Lupus Research Institute to support only bold novel research in lupus – the creativity and innovation needed to drive scientific discovery in this complex autoimmune disease. Together the organizations have generated over \$200-million for cutting edge lupus research, delivering many of the most pivotal scientific breakthroughs of the past decade. Today the LRI is the world's leading private supporter of innovative research in lupus. Learn more at [LupusNY.org](http://LupusNY.org) and [LupusResearchInstitute.org](http://LupusResearchInstitute.org).

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### **CONTACT:**

**Tara DiMilia**  
**O: 908-369-7168**  
[Tara.DiMilia@tmstrat.com](mailto:Tara.DiMilia@tmstrat.com)

**Denise Prior**  
**O: 212-218-2840**  
[dprior@lupusresearch.org](mailto:dprior@lupusresearch.org)