

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CF FOUNDATION TAKES *GREAT STRIDES* FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS

**BETHESDA, Md.; April 5, 2006** — Today, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation announced the kick-off of *GREAT STRIDES: Taking Steps to Cure CF*. This national fund-raising program, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, aims to raise \$32.5 million in 2006 to support vital cystic fibrosis (CF) research, education and care programs. *GREAT STRIDES* is the CF Foundation's largest and fastest-growing signature event.

Tens of thousands of walkers are expected to turn out at the more than 500 sites nationwide from March to June. Some walks will coincide with *National Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month* in May. More than 90 cents of every dollar raised by the CF Foundation is used to fund CF research and care programs. *GREAT STRIDES 2006* is sponsored nationally by American Airlines<sup>®</sup> and Solvay Pharmaceuticals.

"Our organization was built by volunteers, both families affected directly by cystic fibrosis, and many others as well, who are committed to raising the dollars that fuel our cutting-edge research," said Robert J. Beall, Ph.D., president and CEO of the CF Foundation. "*GREAT STRIDES* brings people together to walk that extra mile as a community. Their dedication continues to make this event a rousing success every year."

More than 30,000 people nationwide have this life-threatening disease. In addition, more than 10 million Americans are genetic carriers. Carriers each have one copy of the defective CF gene, but do not have the disease and its symptoms. It takes two copies of the gene for a child to be born with cystic fibrosis. For people with CF, the defective gene causes the body to produce a faulty protein that leads to abnormally thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and can result in fatal lung infections. The mucus also obstructs the pancreas, causing difficulty for a person to absorb nutrients in food.

With the support of the CF Foundation, there has been tremendous progress in cystic fibrosis research and care. The median age of survival has improved from early childhood in the 1950s to the mid-30s today. However, CF continues to be a critical health matter, as most individuals with cystic fibrosis must battle lung disease for their entire lives. At least one person dies each day from this disease. To get involved with *GREAT STRIDES*, call (800) FIGHT CF, or visit [www.cff.org/great\\_strides](http://www.cff.org/great_strides).

*The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, headquartered in Bethesda, Md., is a donor-supported, nonprofit organization committed to finding therapies and ultimately a cure for cystic fibrosis, and to improving the lives of those with the disease. For more information, visit [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org).*

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