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For Immediate Release

MI LUPUS FOUNDATION APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS & SELECTS NEW OFFICERS



Nicole Winters-Smith Allan Fawcett Stephanie Houseman Sheree Jackson Matthew Henry

(Michigan – November 16, 2023) – The Michigan Lupus Foundation is pleased to announce five new members were recently appointed to its Board of Directors: Allan Fawcett of Ada, MI; Matthew Henry of Detroit, MI; Stephanie Houseman of Grand Rapids, MI; Sheree Jackson of West Bloomfield, MI; and Nicole Winters-Smith of Detroit, MI. Each new member will help the foundation serve its mission to improve the quality of life for those living with lupus through support, education and research with the goal of finding a cure.

A new slate of board officers was also recently selected: Harminder (Harry) Bhogal as board president; Michael Lang as vice president; Matthew Henry as treasurer; and Helayne Shaw as recorder.

“We are excited to expand our board with five new members whose talents, expertise and energy are welcomed additions to our fight against lupus,” said newly elected President Harry Bhogal. “The new members are enthusiastic advocates for lupus awareness and will help the foundation make new and meaningful connections and advancements in the lupus community throughout the state.”

For more information about lupus and the MI Lupus Foundation, visit <http://milupus.org>.

About Allan Fawcett

Allan Fawcett of Ada, MI currently works as a human resources consultant and has a long-standing career in human resources across the West Michigan community. Fawcett was diagnosed with lupus nephritis about 20 years ago and has worked hard to continue leading a productive life while fighting the disease. As a lupus nephritis patient,

Fawcett has participated in numerous focus groups and clinical trials facilitated by West Michigan Rheumatology to help benefit the future of all lupus patients. He looks forward to advocating for lupus patients at a local and national level. He has been married for 23 years and is the father of a senior at the West Michigan Aviation Academy.

About Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry of Detroit, MI has an extensive background working in finance and operations at manufacturing companies with an expertise in continuous improvement and growth. For over 25 years, he has lead organizations where he has created a positive employee culture to improve each business. Henry has prior volunteer experience serving as a board member for the youth basketball association and volunteering for the JDRCF & Indianapolis Police Department's charity events. Henry's mother-in-law had lupus until her passing and Henry said he did not understand the impact of lupus until he personally knew someone battling the disease. By serving on the MI Lupus Foundation's board of directors, he hopes to help both those with the disease and also increase awareness among the general public.

About Stephanie Houseman

Stephanie Houseman of Grand Rapids, MI is a real estate agent with Keller Williams Grand Rapids North and holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and sales. Houseman was diagnosed with lupus in 2008 after experiencing 2 months of onset symptoms. After going into remission for 10 years, she received the difficult news that she was in kidney failure and had to undergo a kidney transplant, which was successful. Houseman is passionate about advocating for those with lupus and has an inspirational social media account (Instagram: @spoonie_stephh) that has let her connect with fellow patients around the world and encourage others to share their own lupus journeys. She has advocated at the state and federal level for increased research and funding for lupus and is open to sharing her story to create awareness around what it's like to live with a chronic illness.

About Sheree Jackson

Sheree Jackson of West Bloomfield, MI currently works as Vice President of Compliance at Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network. She has over 18 years combined education and experience in criminal justice, corporate compliance, risk mitigation, healthcare audits, clinical management and quality improvement. Jackson possess a robust background in the field of human services from managed care to the enforcement of bylaws, policies, and procedures. As a compliance professional, she has extensive knowledge concerning roles and responsibilities and leads a department responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud waste and abuse under the prepaid health insurance plan. Jackson has previous volunteer experience at the HealHer Collective and Thrive Global. Jackson had a childhood friend who had lupus and faced significant challenges in carrying out everyday activities. At that young age, she didn't fully grasp what lupus entailed, but now, that personal experience has profoundly influenced her perspective and dedication to advocating for children with lupus.

About Nicole Winters-Smith

Nicole Winters-Smith of Detroit, MI currently serves as a senior director at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan in the sales area. Nicole earned an MBA and BBA degree from The University of Michigan-Ross School of Business with concentrations in accounting, human resources and finance. Winters-Smith has spent more than 25 years in client services and has supported countless Michigan-based companies while working at Price Waterhouse, Mercer and Blue Cross. Winters-Smith and her family are dedicated to the community and passionate about projects that involve children and provide experiences related to youth education including the Berkley Public Schools programs for academics, music & families in need; the Children's Center of Detroit; Metro Detroit Youth Day, Forgotten Harvest, Ronald McDonald House, The Parade Company, Greater Dreams Ministry, The Judson Center and Wolverine Pathways. Winters-Smith's daughter was diagnosed with lupus at age 16 and their family has been on a journey to improve and stabilize her health. As they have joined the lupus community, they are amazed at the strength of true warriors that battle the disease, given the many twists and turns the disease can take. As a family, they will continue to seek out opportunities to advocate for more research and awareness of lupus.

About Lupus

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that causes the body to attack its own healthy tissues and organs. It can affect any part of the body causing widespread pain and inflammation. Common symptoms include crippling fatigue, fever and joint pain. Lupus affects each person differently and may go into periods of flares and remissions. More people have lupus than cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, sickle-cell anemia, and cystic fibrosis combined. It is estimated that between 322,000 and 1.5 million people in the United States suffer from this disease. Lupus primarily affects young women between the ages of 15-45 years old and occurs more frequently in women of African American, Hispanic, or Asian descent. There is currently no cure for lupus.

About the MI Lupus Foundation

The MI Lupus Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that exists to improve the quality of life for those living with lupus through support, education and research with the goal of finding a cure. The foundation provides financial and informational resources for patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers. The MI Lupus Foundation has been continually serving Michigan since 1974 and is working to build a brighter future for all lupus patients and their families. For more information, visit <http://milupus.org>.

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