



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 4, 2006

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New Web Site Connects Teens Suffering from Crohn's and Colitis Via Chat Room Actors Missi Pyle and Josh Meyers to Host First Chat

(LOS ANGELES) -- When you're growing up with Crohn's or colitis, there usually aren't too many people you feel comfortable talking to about it. But for teens currently suffering from these awful diseases, the world just became a little friendlier. A new Web site launched today, (www.ucandcrohns.org) a joint effort of the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation and the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, connects teens from coast to coast and provides educational games and tools.

"For a sick child, the quickest way to recovery is understanding that you are not alone and that someone else can relate to your struggles. It helps relieve the pain of any disease," says Michele, a Starlight Starbright teen and regular ucandcrohns.org user. "The UC and Crohn's site connects sick children with the reality that there is hope and a future for every single one of them. When I go to the site, I grow through the knowledge that the tips and articles provide. But more importantly, I can smile because I know I'm not alone. I have met lifelong friends who will always be by my side."

Crohn's and colitis affect a child's self-esteem and create all kinds of isolation. Recent estimates tell us as many as 140,000 people under the age of 18 suffer from these diseases in the US alone. The chat room, part of a Web site dedicated to teens with these diseases, is a safe and secure online community where teens can meet and chat with other teens facing similar issues, and also learn tips and strategies for coping with their disease and treatment.

The first online chat will be hosted by **Missi Pyle** of "Dodge Ball" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," along with **Josh Meyers** of "That 70's Show" and Mad TV." The chat, which is for teens between the ages of 13 and 20, will take place on Tuesday, August 8 at 3 PM PST. To access the chat, go to www.ucandcrohns.org/chat.html.

Missi Pyle says: "These kids are inspiring and so full of hope. I am really awestruck at their bravery and humor in spite of the challenges life brings them. I am honored to be hosting the first chat along with the very funny Josh Meyers. Please join us. It's gonna be awesome!"

Josh Meyers adds: "I'm really looking forward to chatting it up with the kids. Hopefully this time I'll be able to get a word in edgewise. It's hard to keep up with these guys. They're mostly teenagers and I learned long ago not to try and talk more than a teenager. You can't win. Also they type faster than me."

The site boasts the following features, just to name a few:

- Chats between teens dealing with UC or Crohn's (professionally moderated)
- Advice on nutrition so teens can still go out to eat with their friends
- Survival skills at school, such as, how to handle teachers, long absences and communicating needs without having to divulge too much information
- Tips on incorporating fitness into this lifestyle
- Educational games
- Polls and surveys that reveal how teens *really* feel about Crohn's and colitis

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About Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are painful, medically incurable illnesses that attack the digestive system. Crohn's disease may attack anywhere from the mouth to the anus, while ulcerative colitis inflames the large intestine (colon) only. Symptoms may include persistent diarrhea, abdominal pain or cramps, rectal bleeding, fever, and weight loss. Many patients require hospitalization and surgery. These illnesses can cause severe complications, including colon cancer in patients with long-term disease. Some 1.4 million Americans suffer from Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, including as many as 150,000 under the age of 18. Most people develop the diseases between the ages of 15 and 35.

About CCFA

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America's (CCFA) mission is to cure and prevent Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis through research, and to improve the quality of life of children and adults affected by these digestive diseases through education and support. More than 80 cents of every dollar the Foundation spends goes to mission-critical programs. CCFA consistently meets the standards of organizations that monitor charities, including the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance (give.org) and the American Institute of Philanthropy (charitywatch.org). For more information, contact CCFA at 800-932-2423 or visit www.ccfa.org.

About Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation

Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation is a nonprofit organization that transforms the lives of seriously ill children and their families through imaginative programs that educate, uplift their spirits, foster a sense of community, and help alleviate the pain and fear of prolonged illness. Starlight Starbright offers an impressive array of in-hospital, outpatient, school and home-based programs and services that touch the lives of more than 180,000 children and families each month. To learn more visit www.starlight.org.

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