



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **New Film, Directed by Mary Stuart Masterson, Features Kristen Stewart as a Young Woman with the Neuro-degenerative disease Friedreich's ataxia**

March 3, 2009- *The Cake Eaters*, a film directed by Mary Stuart Masterson, written by Jayce Bartok and featuring an incredible ensemble cast including Kristen Stewart (*Twilight*) as a young woman with the neuro-degenerative disease Friedreich's ataxia (FA), will be released in select cities including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago (among others) on March 13th starting with a sneak preview in Los Angeles on March 11th.

Friedreich's ataxia is a progressive debilitating life shortening, neuro-muscular disorder that robs people of the ability to walk, and can compromise their ability to perform the daily activities many of us take for granted. Scoliosis, diabetes, and serious heart disorders are also common with FA which affects an estimated 5,000 children and adults in the United States.

To research the role of a young woman with Friedreich's ataxia, the film team spent time with families affected by the disease. Kristen Stewart's portrayal of a young woman with Friedreich's ataxia brilliantly captures the physical manifestations of the disease. The film beautifully represents the social and emotional struggle as well as issues relating to loss of independence faced by a young person with a neuro-degenerative disorder. Mary Caruso, mother of two young women with FA said, "The *Cake Eaters* brings insight into the pain behind the face of Friedreich's ataxia. The character Beagle, played by Aaron Stanford, has an ability to look beyond the disease, and gives hope to all people facing life with this condition."

Jennifer Farmer, the Executive Director of the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) – a non-profit organization that funds and facilitates research into treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia stated, "We are grateful to Jayce Bartok, Mary Stuart Masterson, 57th & Irving Productions, The 7th Floor and the cast and crew of *The Cake Eaters* for telling a story of living life fully despite disability – one all too familiar to many of our FA families."

The FARA and the Friedreich's ataxia community are looking forward to the release of the film in the following markets: New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Arizona, Florida, Texas, Indianapolis, Upstate New York, Connecticut, Kansas, among others. For a complete list of film showing dates and locations, please

visit: [www.thecakeeaters.com](http://www.thecakeeaters.com)

**About FARA**

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to accelerating research leading to treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia. <http://www.CureFA.org>

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