



NEWS

FARA's First Friends & Allies Award Presented to the Executive & Creative Team of The Cake Eaters

September 25, 2009- The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) presented their first Friends & Allies Award to the executive and creative team of the award winning film, *The Cake Eaters* on September 11, 2009 in Branford, CT. Mary Stuart Masterson, (Director/ Producer), Jayce Bartok (Screenplay writer), Jesse Scolaro (Producer), and Carol & Patrick Morris (Executive Producers) accepted the award on behalf of *The Cake Eaters* team at the Bode/ Caruso Family's Find A Cure Dinner/ Auction fundraiser event.

The values of FARA's Friends and Allies award are rooted in what it means to be a good friend to our fellow person- treating one another with respect, dignity, and kindness. *The Cake Eaters* team modeled that kind of friendship to the Friedreich's ataxia community and FARA's mission by attending fundraising events, lending their names to the cause and personally making in kind and monetary contributions to the organization.

The team has also notably demonstrated their friendship with their film *The Cake Eaters*, released earlier this year, which featured a main character with Friedreich's ataxia- Georgia played by Kristen Stewart. The story was told with a sensitivity that made people pay attention to a character with a rare neuromuscular disorder and care about her struggle. In this film, art served as a powerful medium for storytelling and raising awareness- a unique awareness of Friedreich's ataxia that FARA could not have generated on its own.

To research the role of a young woman with Friedreich's ataxia, the film team spent time with families affected by the disease. In addition to accurately portraying the physical manifestation of the disease, the team also worked to develop the humanity of the characters. 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, Executive Director at FARA, stated "We are grateful to *The Cake Eaters* team for telling Georgia's story with dignity and respect for her struggle, for the awareness the film has fostered and for the personal kindness the team members have shown to the FA community and to FARA."

For more information on *The Cake Eaters*, please visit <http://www.thecakeeaters.com/>

For more information on Friedreich's ataxia and the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance, please visit www.cureFA.org

About FARA

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance's (FARA) mission is to marshal and focus the resources and relationships needed to cure FA by raising funds for research, promoting public awareness, and aligning scientists, patients, clinicians, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies and other organizations dedicated to curing FA and related diseases. <http://www.CureFA.org>

Contact

Jennifer Farmer

Executive Director, Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance

(484) 875 3015

info@curefa.org