

# 2008



Born to be *Alive* 

FEATURING

O·A·R·



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## Flagship Fundraiser Celebrates Life

### Novartis CEO Ludwig Hantson Honored as MVP

By Kevin Adler

Most people remember the cover of the October 1993 Sports Illustrated. There was Boomer Esiason with his 2-year-old son Gunnar, afflicted with cystic fibrosis, raised on his shoulders. That picture represented the beginning of the Esiason family's public fight against CF through the Boomer Esiason Foundation and attached a name and face to the disease.

The cute kid on top of his father's shoulders has grown up and developed into an inspiration to others in the CF community. Today, Gunnar is 17, plays multiple sports, and is living the life of any American teenager while battling the disease.

Father and son shared master-of-ceremonies responsibilities in welcoming a record crowd of 826 people to the 15th annual Booming Celebration in March at The Waldorf=Astoria in New York City. The theme for the Foundation's flagship fundraiser was appropriately tabbed "Born to be Alive."

"We are here to celebrate life," said Boomer. "When we learned Gunnar had CF in 1993... all I wanted was for him to be alive. Our dream has come true. Everything I wanted Gunnar to experience, he has experienced.

"We couldn't do it without your support." Gunnar's previous year, detailed in a video, had ups and downs. A hospitalization in the summer was a reminder that CF is a relentless

disease, but Gunnar recovered and earned his way onto his high school football team. As the second-string quarterback, Gunnar threw a touchdown pass late in the season – one of the many experiences that father and son now share.

"Dreams come true," said Gunnar. "This evening is called 'Born to be Alive,' and it means that I am what I'm supposed to be."

Apparently, Gunnar also is supposed to be a very popular guy. Gunnar and his sister Sydney hosted a teens-only party for about 100 of their closest friends at the Booming Celebration. They all stormed the dance floor after the dinner and auction to rock to the music of featured band O.A.R. (see story, page 6).



## Event Honors Ludwig Hantson of Novartis

Ludwig Hantson, Head of Pharma North America and CEO, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, was named the 2008 Most Valuable Player. “This award recognizes the contributions of many at Novartis,” said Hantson. “We are steadfast in our desire to encourage and empower those who have cystic fibrosis.”

Novartis is leading the charge to provide treatment, education, and medical support for the growing population of adults with CF. This spring, Novartis released “Becoming Christopher,” a short film and discussion guide, that was developed to educate adult CF patients and their families.

“We recognize that the shift from pediatric care to adult care can be a challenging transition for patients, families, and even CF care teams,” said Hantson. “We applaud BEF for helping to establish a premier adult care center (the Gunnar Esiason Adult Cystic Fibrosis and Lung Program at Columbia University Medical Center) in New York City.”

Novartis is the first pharmaceutical company to be represented as the Most Valuable Player,

and Esiason applauded the company for sending 38 people to the Booming Celebration. Esiason called the MVP designation a major milestone for BEF’s relationship with Novartis and the entire pharmaceutical industry. He praised Novartis for maintaining its commitment to CF research after purchasing Chiron Corp. in 2006.

Hantson was impressed how many people donated their time to the event. “The Celebration reinforced the importance of volunteering and what a difference that makes,” he said.

## Emily Schreiber and Scott Johnson Receive Courage Award

Two CF patients were cited as the 2008 recipients of the Michael Brennan Courage Award,

which honors the spirit of one of BEF’s first and favorite student interns.

Emily Schreiber is a ninth grader who lives in Birmingham, Ala. Diagnosed with CF in 2003 at age 9, Schreiber quickly set out to incorporate her passion – swimming – into fighting the dis-

ease. From an initial fundraiser that had a goal of raising \$3,000, she has expanded Laps for CF far beyond her community to incorporate partnerships with the University of Alabama and Auburn University. She has raised more than \$1 million so far.

Three hospitalizations in the past year have not slowed Schreiber’s ambitious goals. This summer, Schreiber will lead the BioGuard Splash for CF program, through which she hopes to get more than a million people to swim for their own benefit and to raise funds for CF patients. Also, Laps for CF and BEF have teamed up to bring swimathons to colleges nationwide this year.

“I challenge everyone to get in the pool this summer!” Schreiber said. “We all have challenges, and mine is CF. I look at it that CF is not a

**“Life is filled with ups and downs, but I never stop believing that I can beat this disease.” –Scott Johnson**

trap; it’s an opportunity. I can do good for many people by raising money and awareness.”

Brennan Award recipient and endurance athlete Scott Johnson, 36, is an inspiration to all adults living with CF. He received a double-lung transplant in 2001, and, in the words

# BOOMING CELEBRATION 2008

## 2008 BOOMING CELEBRATION AWARD WINNERS

**MOST VALUABLE PLAYER\***  
Ludwig Hantson

**HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES**  
Jerry Cahill  
Ludwig Hantson\*  
Craig Janoff  
Suzette Janoff  
Craig Schiller

**TIMOTHY M. O'BRIEN AWARD**  
Mike Norseth

**MILLION DOLLAR RING CLUB**  
Joe "Dee" Dussich  
Peter Weedfald

**MICHAEL BRENNAN COURAGE AWARD:**  
Scott Johnson  
Emily Schreiber

**QUIET GIANTS:**  
Gearoid Faherty  
Greg Keys  
Kirk Umphrey

**GAME BALLS:**  
Joseph A. Belfatto  
Jack Cassidy  
Kevin Cassidy  
Chris Culos  
Jerry DePizzo  
Patrick Doyle  
Joe "Dee" Dussich  
Gary Fritz  
Benj Gershman  
Heather Greenfeig  
Billy Heinzerling  
Dan Krygowski  
James Madigan  
Richard On  
Mikel Paris  
Anthony Patterson  
Jef Powell  
Neil Rieger  
Mary Ann Rinkleff  
Dave Roberge  
Marc Roberge  
Nasim Roberge  
Drew Simmons  
Jason Swartz

(all MVPs are inducted)



of another former Brennan Award winner, Katie Bieler: "Scott is a double-lung transplant gone wild."

As a youngster, the wiry, energetic Johnson followed his older brother onto the baseball diamond and soccer field, as well as skateboarding and surfing. "When a parent finds your child has a serious disease, your natural reaction is to coddle him. But my parents didn't do that; they encouraged me to do what my brother did," said Johnson.

Later, as CF took its toll, Johnson became reliant on oxygen units before his lung transplants. But Johnson's competitive drive did not waver. "Before I came along, there didn't seem to be any athletic component for someone after a lung transplant," he said. "I wanted to change that."

Johnson has completed more than two dozen endurance events and plans to compete for Team Boomer. All the while, he's a manager for clinical research firm PPD, Inc., in Morrisville, N.C.

CF patients derive inspiration from each other, said Johnson. "When I started doing triathlons, I thought I was only doing them for myself. To some extent, it has to be for yourself, or you won't push when you're at Mile 22 in a marathon," Johnson said. "But it's also larger than me. [It's about] making people with CF stand up and take notice,

being their role model for what they can do."

Johnson added that BEF's scholarships for athletes are crucial. "Scholarships are a great springboard," he said. "The idea is to encourage kids to be athletic. It's not just when your doctor asks if you are exercising, and you say yes."

That's what it's all about: celebrating life. Whether it's throwing touchdown passes like Gunnar, swimming like Emily, or competing in triathlons like Johnson – we are all "Born to be Alive." ■

**\$2.9 Million**  
Total Money Raised

### BY THE NUMBERS:

**826** Attendees

**180** Journal Ads sold

**100** Auction items sold

**70** Tables sold

**66** Volunteers

**45** Engineering/Production crew members

**9** Plasmas

**7** Cameras

**1** 16' x 9' LCD board



## Booming Celebration Becomes Family Affair

### New High School Party Allows Gunnar's Friends to Attend CF Fundraiser

By Eli Gelman

Olivia and Loren Ziegler occasionally get jealous of their parents. It happens every March when Boomer Esiason Foundation Board Member Brent Ziegler and his wife Debbie attend Booming Celebration.

The two teenagers are friends with Gunnar Esiason and always wanted to attend the Foundation's flagship fundraiser at The Waldorf=Astoria in New York City. The only problem is the annual gala was only open to adults.

"We were never allowed to go," Olivia said. "We always had to sit at home with the babysitter."

That all changed this year at the 15th Annual Booming Celebration March 8 with the creation of a simultaneous auxiliary party held solely for high school students. Booming Celebration For High Schoolers turned the night into a family affair by allowing about 100 friends of Gunnar and his sister Sydney to join their parents in supporting the fight against cystic fibrosis (CF) at the Foundation's biggest event of the year. It also gave everyone a chance to reflect on how Gunnar has developed into a young man while battling CF.

"I'm here every year because of Gunnar," said Ziegler, who is one of the Esiason family's oldest friends and helped organize the first

Booming Celebration. "What's exciting to me is (Saturday) was my first time to be there with my two oldest daughters. It's amazing watching them (all) grow up together and now they're here to support Gunnar and be a part of this tremendous cause."

Veteran Board Member Jack Cassidy brought his two daughters to the dinner while his son Trey stayed with his friends at the high school gathering. He believes his children and their friends represent the future in the fight against CF.

"It always has to get handed off to another generation," Cassidy said. "Now these kids after all these years of doing it, they'll be able to take the ball and run with it."

"Again, for us to meet the families of everybody else really rejuvenates that entire thought of friendship and family that we all share here."

The high school bash featured a DJ, dance floor, various finger foods and was held in the Louis XVI room upstairs from the Grand Ballroom where the parents enjoyed dinner. Aside from Gunnar, the other big draw was a chance to see the band O.A.R. perform live.

"Maybe 90 percent Gunnar, 10 percent O.A.R.," Olivia quipped.

As Gunnar stood in the middle of the room surrounded by a crowd, many of his guests pointed out how he has grown and begun to take after

his father. Some commented on his height, how he seemingly looks taller with each passing day. But most talked about his personality and attitude as the key attributes Boomer has handed off.

"I can't stand next to him. He makes me look like I'm two feet tall," said Dave O'Kane, one of his classmates and teammates from the football team at Friends Academy in Locust Valley, N.Y. "Gunnar is someone I look up to and he's a mentor to me."

"He busts on everyone, picks little things out and makes everyone notice them," Loren said.

Perhaps the best example of how Gunnar has developed his father's leadership came from Trey, who, like most people in the room, called Gunnar "an inspiration." When Trey needed advice, he reached out to Gunnar.

"Last year I was going to quit football and I talked to him a little bit about it," Trey said. "He pushed me back into it and I ended up winning a state championship at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, OH."

Said Gunnar: "It means a lot to me because my friends are helping me fight. Maybe I could be an inspiration to many people."

He already is as he becomes more like Boomer. "Amen," Cassidy said. "He could do worse than being like his dad."

So could most people. ■

# MESSAGE FROM O.A.R.

Dear Friends,

As a kid growing up in Maryland, I was raised to enjoy two things: football and crabs. I hate crabs. I love football.

So when Boomer Esiason asks you to be a part of his annual Booming Celebration, you simply say yes and hope crabs are not on the menu. (I figured that The Waldorf=Astoria would be likely to have lobster, so I had no worries about doing the show.)

In the weeks leading up to the event, I was feeling like a kid about to meet one of the stars I pretended to be until the streetlights came on and mom yelled for me to come in for dinner. After I got over the fact that I had finally met a real-life NFL great, it occurred to me that Boomer is a regular guy. He loves his family. He fights for his family. He believes in what he is doing. I immediately saw him for what he was, a father.

After being a part of this event, all of us in the band learned how important it is to follow through in whatever you set out to do. Gunnar taught us that. His story amazed us. If only we all could live our lives with the determination and courage that he does every day. As several people said to us that night, CF never takes a break. It's something that Gunnar and thousands of other people have to fight on a daily basis, over and over again.

Our involvement in the Booming Celebration was simply to support the bigger message: Never Give Up. We just followed through on our pledge to provide some smiles to the guests...who, by the way, rocked. I noticed that the back row decided halfway through our first song that they too could enjoy the vibe. That's the beauty of music. It doesn't leave anyone out.

If only we were treated at all of our gigs as well as we were by the Boomer Esiason Foundation. All night I kept thinking about how classy the entire evening was. It's rare to be surrounded by people who certainly don't have to spend their evening and money in support of a cause as important as CF, but they chose to. That's class. Someone chose to spend twenty-seven grand on a puppy. I'm not saying that dog wasn't cuter than hell, but so is a year in college with room and board. The money raised on March 8 is much more than dollars, though. It represents the gift of chance that people were willing to give toward finding a cure for this disease. Class. It was all around us that night, and we appreciate just being let through the door.

We want to thank the Esiason family for letting us lend what we could to a beautiful evening in New York City. We felt right at home. And to Gunnar, you are an inspiration. I can only hope one day to have a child as brave as you.



Thank you,  
Marc Roberge, *Lead vocals/rhythm guitar*

O.A.R.





## BEF Golf Invitational

May 5, 2008  
 Glen Oaks Club  
 Old Westbury, New York  
[www.befgolf.com](http://www.befgolf.com)



**BEF Maryland Golf Classic**  
 May 20, 2008  
 The Members Club At Four Streams  
 Beallsville, Maryland  
[www.marylandgolfclassic.com](http://www.marylandgolfclassic.com)



**Commerce Bank Championship**  
 June 27-29, 2008  
 Red Course at Eisenhower Park  
 East Meadow, New York



**Boomer's Big Bang: Sporting Clays Pro Am**  
 June 11-12, 2008  
 Elk Creek Hunt Club  
 Owenton, Kentucky



**Rimington Football Camp**  
 July 7-9, 2008  
 Omaha, Nebraska  
[www.rimingtonfootballcamp.com](http://www.rimingtonfootballcamp.com)



**Samsung's Four Seasons of Hope Annual Dinner**  
 June 16, 2008  
 Cipriani Wall Street  
 New York, New York  
[www.4seasonsofhope.com](http://www.4seasonsofhope.com)



**Nebraska Golf Classic**  
 July 17-18, 2008  
 Quarry Oaks in Ashland  
 Omaha, Nebraska



**Massachusetts Golf Classic**  
 July 20, 2008  
 Oakridge Golf Course  
 Feeding Hills, Massachusetts  
[www.massachusettsgolfclassic.com](http://www.massachusettsgolfclassic.com)



**DCU Charity Golf Classic**  
 June 17, 2008  
 Wedgewood Pines  
 Stow, Massachusetts  
[www.dcuforkids.org](http://www.dcuforkids.org)



**The All-American Sporting Clays Championship & World FITASC Challenge**  
 July 24-27, 2008  
 Elk Creek Hunt Club  
 Owenton, Kentucky



**CVS Charity Classic**  
 June 22-24, 2008  
 Rhode Island Country Club  
 Barrington, Rhode Island  
[www.cvscharityclassic.com](http://www.cvscharityclassic.com)



**Montauk Redbone Presented by BEF**  
 September 24-26, 2008  
 Montauk, New York  
 Striper, Bluefish, False Albacore  
[www.redbone.org](http://www.redbone.org)



**Outback Steakhouse Empire Challenge**  
 June 24, 2008  
 Hofstra University  
 Hempstead, New York  
[www.empirechallenge.com](http://www.empirechallenge.com)