

## **An Extraordinary Afternoon with Chuck Scarborough, Dominick Dunne and Lorraine Bracco at the Hope for Depression Research Foundation Luncheon**

**Palm Beach, Fla.** – March 28, 2008 – The Hope for Depression Research Foundation held its inaugural luncheon to support HDRF’s pioneering research to find a cure for depression, with the help of some very special guests. Audrey Gruss, HDRF’s Founder and Chairman, with Luncheon Co-Chairs – Catherine Adler, Jackie Drake, Lori Gendelman and Lis Waterman – held the luncheon at the “Hope Pavilion” at Mar-a-Lago.

News journalist Chuck Scarborough, winner of 31 Emmy Awards, was Master of Ceremonies and presented the staggering statistics of depression. He informed the 250 guests that depression is the leading cause of disability among 15 to 44 year olds, with a loss of 37 million disability days each year and an economic burden of \$53 billion dollars annually.

Scarborough then told the story of Joanne Murray, a writer whose depression was so severe that suicidal thoughts were constantly with her. She struggled for years, and her young daughter was the only thing that kept her going. He then revealed that this woman sought help for her depression, started writing using her maiden name and is now known to the world as J.K. Rowling, the famed *Harry Potter* author. “How close the world came to losing one of our most creative people” and “how many potential J.K. Rowlings could we lose?” said Scarborough.

Scarborough introduced Audrey Gruss, who shared her personal story, describing how she and her family experienced her mother’s painful battle with depression for decades. Her mother Hope, who remained a talented writer and poet throughout her illness, experienced misdiagnosis, the trial and error of numerous medications, and finally found moderate relief before she passed away while visiting Palm Beach in 2005. Audrey Gruss, who has both donated and raised significant funds for many worthwhile causes, vowed that she would spend the rest of her life trying to find a cure for depression. She created HDRF in her mother Hope’s honor, in April 2006.

Audrey Gruss explained HDRF’s unique research approach, which is the first funded program to support the pioneering concept of neuropsychology – integrating the biology of the brain with the psychology of the mind. Dr. Peter Freed and Maggie Zellner, L.P., HDRF Research Grant recipients, described

their cutting-edge research projects and praised Audrey Gruss for her vision in creating this unparalleled foundation.

Dominick Dunne shared his struggle with depression and described his feelings of failure and even thoughts of suicide at times in his life. He told the group that one of his sons also struggled with depression and had finally sought help. This gifted writer's story conveyed his main message, which was that the stigma of depression remains, and must be removed.

Lorraine Bracco, an award-winning actress, who was well known for the role of the psychiatrist in *The Sopranos*, also conveyed her own story of depression. She commented about the irony of playing a psychiatrist on *The Sopranos*, when she was so badly in need of one herself. She shared Dunne's hope that the stigma of emotional disorders would soon go away. She urged that people get treatment, and not consider it a sign of weakness. Bracco believes that her role showed others that it was OK to seek help, as fans continue to comment, "If Tony Soprano could go for help, so can I!"

The luncheon closed with Audrey Gruss reading one of her mother's poems to a standing ovation.

The mission of Hope for Depression Research Foundation (HDRF) is to fund cutting-edge, international scientific research into the origins, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depression and related disorders — anxiety, bipolar disorder, postpartum depression, posttraumatic stress syndrome and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — with the ultimate goal of finding a cure. HDRF sets itself apart by funding pioneering research that integrates the fields of neuroscience (the brain) and psychology (the mind).

For more information please contact:  
The Hope for Depression Research Foundation  
667 Madison Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10065

Helen Street – Senior Administrator  
Tel: 212 446 4235  
Fax: 212 901 0912  
Email: [hdrf@gruss.com](mailto:hdrf@gruss.com)

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