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For Immediate Release

**WILLIAMS SYNDROME TO BE THE FOCUS OF EVENTS NATIONWIDE
DURING THE MONTH OF MAY**

More than 10,000 people in cities across the country expected to "Walk for Williams" in May

(Troy, MI) – Thousands are expected to join the Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) during the month of May to raise awareness for Williams syndrome (WS), a genetic condition that remains largely unknown to the general public, educators and many doctors. Included in the awareness events are walks in major cities across the U.S. including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Detroit, and Houston.

Events are being held to increase community awareness and provide financial support for the Williams Syndrome Association, the nation's largest support organization for those with WS. Funds will be used to help finance critical research and scholarship programs for individuals with Williams syndrome. New research can lead to further insights about the disorder and new treatments for the future. Scientists are particularly interested in studying issues such as diabetes, hypertension and anxiety in Williams syndrome which may contribute to greater understanding of these problems in millions of other affected Americans.

Featured on 20/20 and MSNBC, Williams syndrome is characterized by medical and developmental delays, cardiovascular disease and learning disabilities. At the same time, people with Williams syndrome often have unique abilities, including advanced verbal skills, highly sociable personalities and an affinity for music. Children with Williams syndrome need costly, ongoing medical care and early interventions that may not be covered by insurance or state funding. In addition to research, the WSA's *Walks for Williams* during the month of May will provide funding for the Williams Syndrome Association's medical emergency fund, which provides financial support to families for expenses associated with costly medical treatments for their children.

About the Williams Syndrome Association

The Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization formed in 1982 by family members of people living with the disorder. Today, the WSA is the most comprehensive resource for people and families living with Williams syndrome as well as doctors, researchers and educators. The association provides programs and support in the areas of education, enrichment and research. For more information on the Williams Syndrome Association, please visit www.williams-syndrome.org.

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