

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**PANERA BREAD HOSTS 7TH ANNUAL "TOUCHDOWN FOR AUTISM"
BENEFITING THE DAN MARINO FOUNDATION**

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL – Panera Bread is once again inviting its customers to celebrate National Autism Awareness Month while scoring a "Touchdown for Autism". Panera Bread will offer an exclusive "Football" cookie menu item that will only be available in bakery-cafés from April 1st through April 15th 2017. The 7th Annual Touchdown for Autism awareness and fundraising campaign will be hosted at thirty-one (31) Panera Bread Cafés across Broward and Palm Beach Counties (excludes Hallandale Beach) and will benefit The Dan Marino Foundation.

These one-of-a-kind cookies are baked fresh daily at Panera Bread bakery-cafes and will be sold individually or by the "Marino Dozen," 13 cookies. \$1 from the sale of each cookie will benefit the Foundation. In addition, with the generous help of their customers, Panera Bread will be collecting funds in all thirty-one (31) bakery-cafés through their Operation Doughnation boxes located next to the registers at each café. Operation Doughnation boxes will give Panera Bread customers an opportunity to further support The Dan Marino Foundation every time they visit a Panera Bread bakery-café now through May 31, 2017.

"This will be our 7th year teaming up with Panera for our annual cookie campaign. We appreciate everything Sam and his team does to raise awareness and make a difference in the autism community. When a company as strong as Panera gets involved, it helps pave the way for others to follow and we are extremely thankful for the opportunity to stand together," said Dan Marino, Chairman of the Dan Marino Foundation.

Over the last six years Panera Bread has raised \$368,487, for The Dan Marino Foundation and the Foundation's programs for children and young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities.

"I am so proud of this program and how it has grown," said Sam Covelli, owner and CEO of Covelli Enterprises. "Our bakery-cafes are passionate about these cookies and what they represent, it's wonderful to see the way the community responds to creating autism awareness with The Dan Marino Foundation."

Do your part and purchase football cookies at a Panera Bread near you! Be sure to post your cookie experience with the hashtag #marinocookie.

ABOUT COVELLI ENTERPRISES:

Covelli Enterprises is the largest franchisee of Panera Bread, LLC with more than 300 bakery-cafés in six states and in Canada. In 2016, the company donated more than \$28 million to charity through unsold bread products for local hunger relief agencies and monetary donations to other non-profit organizations. www.covelli.com

ABOUT THE DAN MARINO FOUNDATION: The Dan Marino Foundation, Inc., a 501(c) 3 organization was established by Dan and Claire Marino, motivated by their experiences in raising their son, Michael, who is diagnosed with autism. For over 25 years, the Foundation has been a leader in innovation and change, "empowering individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities." The Foundation has raised more than \$62 million to create unique and impactful initiatives in the community. Among these first-of-their-kind initiatives are the Nicklaus Children's Hospital Dan Marino Outpatient Center, the Marino Autism Research Institute, Marino Adapted Aquatics, Summer STEPS Employment Programs, Virtual Interactive Training Agent Program (ViTA DMF), and now post-secondary programs at both Marino Campus in Broward and at FIU in Miami-Dade. For more information, please visit danmarinofoundation.org or marinocampus.org or vitadm.org.

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