



Melissa Lemieux
Marketing Director SC/GA
Melissa.lemieux@covelli.com
843-300-7859

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PANERA BREAD TO PRESENT \$18,000 CHECK THURSDAY TO PROJECT REX, MUSC'S AUTISM INITIATIVE

SOUTH CAROLINA/GEORGIA – May, 14, 2018 – Covelli Enterprises, the largest franchisee of Panera Bread, will present a check for \$18,000 to the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) Project Rex on Thursday as a result of the company's fundraising efforts during Autism Awareness month in April. The formal check presentation will occur at 11:00 a.m. at the West Ashley Panera Bread at 2000 Sam Rittenberg Boulevard in Charleston, SC. Bagels, pastries and takeaways for attendees will be provided.

From April 9 through 15, all Covelli-owned and operated Panera Bread cafes in South Carolina and Georgia donated 100% of the proceeds from its 'Pieces of Hope' cookie sales, and funds were also collected at the registers throughout the entire month. While this was the first year the cafes in this region participated in the in 'Pieces of Hope' puzzle piece cookie sales, the company as a whole has donated more than \$2 million to autism organizations in the areas it serves since 2010 through the program.

In attendance at the check presentation will be representatives from Panera Bread, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, MUSC, and the Autism News Network, a branch of Project Rex that trains participants in the use of journalism tools and techniques with the goal of building a television and internet news network focused on the complex world of autism.

MUSC's Project Rex, is an initiative dedicated to providing services, support, and treatment to children and young adults who struggle with high functioning autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, social anxiety, and more.

"Panera Bread has been an amazing support to our program. Not only have they provided numerous opportunities to boost awareness and resources for individuals with Autism, they have allowed our program's participants to gain real-world experience in promotion and marketing," said Dr. Frampton Gwynette, Director, MUSC Project Rex Program, who will be in attendance Thursday. "Our participants actually had the incredible opportunity to record a radio commercial and film videos promoting Panera's Autism support campaign. This has helped build their social abilities and vocational skills. We are so grateful for Panera's incredible support. Thank you, Panera Bread!"

About Project Rex

The Project Rex Team consists of doctors and therapists with a passion for helping children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their loved ones. Project Rex provides support and treatment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their parents. Their goal is to help children and young adults to reach their highest potential by enhancing their social skills, their ability to understand emotions, and their adaptability

About Covelli Enterprises

Covelli Enterprises operates more than 300 Panera Bread bakery-cafes in eight states. Headquartered in Warren, Ohio, Covelli Enterprises is the single largest franchisee of Panera Bread, LLC. In 2017, Covelli Enterprises donated more than \$32 million to hunger relief agencies and non-profit organizations through *Covelli Cares*. www.covelli.com