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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PANERA BREAD TO PRESENT \$38,000 CHECK TUESDAY TO SOUTH CAROLINA AUTISM SOCIETY**

*Funds are a result of the company's April record-breaking 'Pieces of Hope for Autism' campaign*

**COLUMBIA, SC – May 31, 2019** – Covelli Enterprises, the largest franchisee of Panera Bread, will present a check for \$38,000 to South Carolina Autism Society as a result of the company's fundraising efforts during Autism Awareness month in April. **The formal check presentation will occur on Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at the Panera Bread in the Vista at 933 Gervais St. in Columbia, SC. Panera food and beverages will be provided for all attendees.**

From April 8 through 14, all Covelli-owned and operated Panera cafes in South Carolina donated 100% of the proceeds from its 'Pieces of Hope for Autism' cookie sales. This was the second year that the South Carolina Panera cafes participated in the promotion, which raised \$18,000 in 2018. The dramatic increase in funds raised is attributed to both record-breaking cookies sales as well as the new Change Roll-up program that allows Panera customers to "roll up" their order totals to the nearest dollar in support of local charities. South Carolina Autism Society was the benefitting partner in all South Carolina cafes from February through April.

In attendance at Tuesday's check presentation will be representatives from Panera Bread and South Carolina Autism Society along with local families with children on the autism spectrum that have been served by South Carolina Autism Society. All will be available for interview after the check presentation.

"We were blown away by the support our 'Pieces of Hope for Autism' campaign received in its second year in our South Carolina Panera cafes," said Sam Covelli, Owner and Operator of Covelli Enterprises. "Due to the incredible enthusiasm of our guests and employees this year, we were able to raise a substantial amount more in funds to help local children and adults with autism gain access to important resources and services. It matters to us that 100% of these dollars remains here in South Carolina and will help level the playing field for local people in the neighborhoods we serve."

'Pieces of Hope for Autism' is Covelli Enterprises' largest annual in-cafe fundraiser that is held in all its owned and operated locations across eight states. The company has donated more than \$2 million to autism organizations in the areas it serves since 2011 through its fundraising efforts including the 'Pieces of Hope for Autism' campaign.

### **About South Carolina Autism Society**

South Carolina Autism Society is a state-wide organization advocating for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders and their families. The group provides assistance, education, services, and resources to improve the lives of individuals affected by autism and every dollar donated stays in South Carolina to ensure the nearly 70,000 individuals with autism spectrum disorder living in the state have opportunities to achieve a quality of life comparable to their peers. [www.scautism.org](http://www.scautism.org)

### **About Covelli Enterprises**

Covelli Enterprises is the single largest franchisee of Panera Bread, LLC and operates 315 Panera Bread bakery-cafés in eight states. In 2018, Covelli Enterprises donated more than \$32 million to hunger relief agencies and non-profit organizations.

[www.covelli.com](http://www.covelli.com)

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