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For Immediate Release

Bear's Restaurant Group and Jordan Porco Foundation Announce Launch of LINKED 4 LIFE Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness Campaign on World Suicide Prevention Day

WORLD RECORD BREAKING EVENT FOR THE LONGEST CHAIN OF LINKED CARABINERS

September 9, 2020 – Hartford CT – In recognition of **World Suicide Prevention Day on Thursday, September 10**, **Bear's Restaurant Group** and the **Jordan Porco Foundation** have announced the creation of a World Record breaking event. **Linked 4 Life**, a new initiative that aims to **raise awareness of the importance of mental health and suicide prevention**, is seeking donations which in turn go toward the creation of the **longest chain of carabiners – 11,000 to be exact**. The event will take place at **Dunkin' Donuts Park, home of the Hartford Yard Goats, on Saturday, October 10**, which is **World Mental Health Day**.

"The carabiner, a clip used to tether together climbers, is a visual reminder that we're linked together, and that it's OK to ask for help," said **Cheryl Antoncic**, co-owner of Bear's Restaurant Group and visioneer of Linked 4 Life. "We're each other's safe space, creating a message of hope, one link at a time. Our pledge to be linked for life will break through the stigma that leaves too many people struggling in silence."

The current record, 8,622 carabiners, was set in September 2019. "11,000 is a big challenge," Antoncic added, "but we are already over 1,000. We arrived at that number in a show of solidarity for the estimated 1,100 college students

that die by suicide each year in the U.S. That's 110 chains of 100 carabiners to break the world record and break through the stigma that prevents too many people from reaching out for help."

"Our mission is to link together one pledge, one person, one carabiner at a time," said the Foundation's **Rachel Papke**, Director of Events & Communications, "inviting people to speak openly about mental health issues while encouraging listening without judgement, to create safe spaces across the country, connecting with a message of hope to those who need help the most." The Foundation, founded in 2011 and based in Hartford, is named for Jordan Porco, who died by suicide when he was a freshman in college.

The October 10 Linked 4 Life world record event at Dunkin' Donuts Park, which will be live streamed, also serves as a launch for what is expected to be an ongoing national movement to build awareness of the importance of mental wellness and suicide prevention. People who want to join the movement and spread the message via social media can use the #Linked4Life hashtag and photo filter, or follow @linked.4.life on Instagram, @linked_4_life on Twitter, or facebook.com/linked_4_life.

Teams and are also encouraged to join in the effort Teams can be comprised of either individuals, private groups and non-retail companies, or retail companies and restaurants. For safety and to ensure social distancing, only two representatives from a team will be allowed at the October 10 event. To find out more information on how to form a team of friends, family, church groups, business associates, or more, visit LinkedforLife.org.

For every \$3 donation to Linked 4 Life, donors will receive one Linked 4 Life carabiner which will be shipped to the donor. Online donations can be made at www.linkedforlife.org. In-person donation locations are at all **Bear's Restaurant Group locations: Bear's Smokehouse BBQ in Hartford, Windsor, South Windsor, and New Haven; Blind Pig Pizza in Hartford; and Black Hog Brewery in Oxford.**

After the World Record Breaking event, the carabiners will be installed as a public art display at a location to be determined in downtown Hartford.

About Bear's Restaurant Group

Bear's Restaurant Group is comprised of four Bear's Smokehouse BBQ locations (Windsor, South Windsor, Hartford and New Haven) and Blind Pig Pizza Company (Hartford). These locally owned restaurants first opened in 2013 in Windsor, CT, and quickly grew with the loyal support of Connecticut residents. Since opening, Bear's has been committed to serving the local community and does so by supporting many non-profits and philanthropic initiatives each year. The mission at Bear's Smokehouse BBQ is simple: Everyone who walks through our doors is either already a friend or will be. Learn more at bearsbbq.com.

About the Jordan Porco Foundation

The Jordan Porco Foundation's mission is to prevent suicide, promote mental health, and create a message of hope for young adults. They accomplish this by providing engaging and uplifting peer-run programs. Their programs raise mental health awareness while encouraging help-seeking and supportive behaviors. The Jordan Porco Foundation is named in memory of the co-founder's son, Jordan. Jordan died by suicide in 2011 as a

college freshman. What started as two grieving parents' vision, has grown into a nationally respected Foundation that helps over 40,000 young adults across the country, each year. Learn more at www.jordanporcofoundation.org | [@jordanporcofoundation](https://twitter.com/jordanporcofoundation).

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