



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America



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# press release

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FROM: The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America & Kids With Food Allergies

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## **ASTHMA, ALLERGY NONPROFITS TO MERGE AND FIGHT COMMON DISEASES TOGETHER**

*Group Will Expand Traditional Outreach and Online Communities, the Combination Patients Want*

(Washington, DC, February 15, 2013) The patient organization with the largest online community for families raising children with food allergies, and the largest organization for asthma & allergy patients intend to merge. The Kids With Food Allergies Foundation (KFA) will become a division of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), and together they will be the most comprehensive nonprofit source of education, advocacy, research, social networking and support for millions of families living with these diseases.

In 2012 the Board of Directors for each organization voted to approve the merger. The required regulatory documents have been filed and partially approved, with completion expected soon.

### **60 Years, 60 Million People**

More than 60 million Americans are living with asthma and allergic diseases – including over 13 million children and adults with food allergies. The prevalence of these chronic diseases has grown dramatically over the past few decades making asthma and allergies some of the most common chronic diseases among all ages. Unfortunately, deaths related to asthma and severe life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) continue to occur.

It is well understood that people with asthma have an increased chance of having food allergies, and people with food allergies have an increased chance of having asthma. In addition, children and adults with food allergies are more likely to have an anaphylactic reaction if they also have asthma.

The guidelines for diagnosis, prevention and management of asthma and food allergies put patient awareness and education at the center of quality care and positive outcomes. Teaching families how to prevent symptoms or attacks, handle emergencies, properly use treatments and care for children with these diseases is critical. "Patient education is key," says Tom Flanagan, Immediate Past Chair of AAFA's National Board of Directors and a parent of children with severe asthma and food allergies. "AAFA and KFA are two of the most respected sources of this type of information and education," says Flanagan, "so this merger will be a great fit for both groups, and great news for the patient community."

### **A Modern Approach to a Growing Problem**

AAFA is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and remains committed to its original mission of education, advocacy and research. AAFA was founded in 1953 at a time when asthma and allergies were first recognized as a national health crisis in the U.S. "We have not wavered in our fight against asthma and allergies," says Bill McLin, AAFA's President & CEO. "Over the past six decades, knowledge about these diseases, methods of patient support and educational tools have evolved," says McLin, "so bringing KFA into the AAFA family will help both organizations meet the growing needs of the people we serve."

Founded in 2005, KFA has become an essential part of the food allergy and anaphylaxis community offering patient education programs, webinars, an allergy buyers' guide, an electronic database of allergen-free recipes and more to help keep children safe and healthy. Most notably, KFA hosts the largest and most active online food allergy and anaphylaxis community at [www.kidswithfoodallergies.org](http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org), a critical platform for parents and caregivers who want to network with others about raising kids with food allergies and related diseases.

Lynda Mitchell, KFA's President and founder, is the parent of a son with severe asthma and food allergies. She will join AAFA's leadership team as Senior Director of KFA. She will oversee KFA programs within AAFA to ensure their continuation. Mitchell will also help expand AAFA's online programs and services in related disease areas such as asthma. "As part of AAFA, KFA will continue all of our current work, and with our combined mission of education, advocacy, and research we will be able to do even more to help families," says Mitchell. "Families raising children with food allergies are often also dealing with anaphylaxis, asthma, latex allergies, skin allergies, nasal allergies and many related conditions. Together we will be the most comprehensive and reliable source for people seeking information and support for all of these issues."

### **About AAFA**

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is the oldest and largest nonprofit patient organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through education, advocacy and research. For more information about AAFA, KFA and to see our merger FAQs visit [www.aafa.org/kfa](http://www.aafa.org/kfa), or call 1-800-7-ASTHMA.

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