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New Survey Reveals Emotional Impact of Food Allergy on Children

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) and Galaxy Nutritional Foods Collaborate to Understand Effects of Food Allergy on Families

FAIRFAX, VA and NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI (September 8, 2011) — A recent survey conducted by the [Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network \(FAAN\)](#), a nonprofit and the trusted source in food allergies, and [Galaxy Nutritional Foods](#), a leading producer of cheese alternatives, examined parents' perspectives on the emotional impact that food allergies have on their children.

Nearly 70% of the parents of children with food allergies surveyed said having a food allergy has impacted their child's quality of life, with 40% indicating their child's life was impacted "somewhat," and 29% "a great deal." Highlights of the survey findings can be viewed at:

<http://www.galaxyfoods.com/landing/galaxy-faan-survey-results/>.

The survey also asked parents about food allergy prevalence in schools and societal understanding of the medical condition. According to the survey, 47% of parents indicated that they were aware of 1 to 2 other children in their child's classroom who also had food allergies. This finding is in line with the latest statistics that show 1 in 13 U.S. children have a food allergy, according to a study published in June by Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Additionally, the FAAN/Galaxy Nutritional Foods survey found that a majority of parents of children with a food allergy felt that school personnel had an "excellent" or "good" understanding of food allergy (54% indicated teachers had a "good" or "excellent" understanding, and 53% indicated administrators did).

"Food allergies can be life threatening, and when parents send their children off to school, especially for the first time, it can create a great deal of anxiety," said [Maria Acebal](#), Chief Executive Officer, FAAN. "This survey reveals encouraging data and tells us awareness efforts to help educators better understand the seriousness of food allergy are working."

The emotional aspects of food allergy, as well as understanding what parents and children are feeling regarding their food allergies, was another survey area of interest. Of those parents surveyed, those who felt food allergy had more of an impact on their child's quality of life were more likely to express feelings of fear, frustration, and being overwhelmed. While those who indicated a lesser impact on quality of life also experience fear, a near majority also feel empowered and supported. Specifically, the survey found the following:

Parents' Feelings Regarding Food Allergy

- 90% of parents feel protective
- 62% of parents feel fearful
- 50% of parents feel frustrated

Parents' Perspective of Child's Feeling Regarding Food Allergy

- 48% of parents believe their child feels frustrated
- 39% of parents believe their child feels fearful
- 37% of parents believe their child feels isolated

The survey also explored participation in everyday life events — activities that most of the general population takes for granted. For parents of children with food allergies, common events such as eating out at a restaurant, attending a birthday party, or sleeping over at a friends' house can be concerning. According to the parents surveyed, they choose not to have their children participate in many of these everyday life events.

- 71% of parents said their child had not eaten at a restaurant with friends or family due to concerns about food allergies
- 45% of parents said their child had not visited the homes of certain friends due to concerns about possible exposure to allergens
- 42% of parents said their child had not attended an overnight event, such as a sleepover or camp, due to concerns about a food allergy
- 41% of parents said their child had not attended a social event by choice, such as another child's birthday party or a play date, due to concerns about a food allergy

"As a company committed to creating and delivering delicious cheese alternative products for those diagnosed with severe milk allergies or with lactose intolerance, we wanted to better understand the emotional impact food allergy has on the families for whom we make our products," said Rick Antonelli, CEO Galaxy Nutritional Foods. "The thought was that many food allergic families experienced these emotions and faced challenges participating in many everyday events, but there was no quantifiable information to confirm it. We hope these findings will help those who do not suffer from food allergy to recognize the emotional toll it can have and put a spotlight on the importance of being more understanding and supportive of those with food allergy and anaphylaxis."

About Galaxy Nutritional Foods

Over the last 25 years, Galaxy Nutritional Foods, based in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, has forged innovation in the lactose intolerant and diet related products industry. Galaxy's Veggie® brand cheese alternative is the leading seller in the nation and is sold in the produce section of the most major supermarkets in the United States and Canada. Galaxy's popular cheese alternative brands available in natural foods stores nationwide, include soy-free Rice®, soy-based Veggy®, dairy-free Vegan®, and dairy- and soy-free Rice Vegan™. For the millions of Americans suffering from dairy allergies, Galaxy developed its allergen free (soy and dairy free)

Rice Vegan brand and the soy-based Vegan brand, which cater to the vegan lifestyle and dairy restricted diets. The company's newest product introductions, Veggie and Vegan brand cream cheese alternatives, have won numerous awards for taste, texture and functionality and are dairy free. Galaxy is a national multi-site silver sponsor of the 2011 FAAN Walk for Food Allergy, which take place in more than 40 locations across the country. For information, please visit www.GalaxyFoods.com.

About FAAN

Founded in 1991, the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) is the trusted source for food allergies, a potentially life-threatening medical condition that afflicts as many as 15 million Americans, including nearly 6 million children. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Fairfax, VA, FAAN is dedicated to raising awareness, providing advocacy and education, and advancing research on behalf of all those affected by food allergies and anaphylaxis. FAAN provides information and educational resources about food allergy to patients, their families, schools, health professionals, pharmaceutical companies, the food industry and government officials. To become a member of FAAN or for more information please visit www.foodallergy.org.

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