



# Lion's Roar

The Newsletter of the Companions in Courage Foundation

Winter 2009

## Rooms Open in Two Florida Hospitals



Members of the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Deerwood, FL Rotary join Pat LaFontaine for the opening of a new room in Jacksonville, FL.

Pat LaFontaine and the Companions in Courage Foundation brought new game rooms to hospitals in Jacksonville and Panama City, FL in the last two months.

On September 16<sup>th</sup> Eddie Allen and the Rotary Club of Deerwood, FL joined with the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars to open a game room at Wolfson Children's Hospital. Owing to local taste, LaFontaine agreed to call the room the "Jaguar's Den".

Wayne Weaver, owner of the Jaguars, Coach Jack Del Rio and players Mercedes Lewis and Greg Jones were on hand to assist LaFontaine with the ribbon cutting.

Teammate Tony Pashos joined the fun via WebEx video conference direct from the Jaguars' locker room. He was joined on the video conference by some of the other hospitals with Lion's Den rooms. Pashos had the children in each hospital doing "the wave" to welcome the patients at Wolfson's.

Local businessman Eddie Allen served as point person for the project and organized the Rotary

and the Jaguars in support of the project. LaFontaine said, "The entire Jacksonville community owes a debt to Eddie for making this happen."

Graham Fraser, CEO of NA Sports and Ironman Florida was the catalyst behind the building of a Lion's Den room in Panama City. To celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> running of Ironman Florida, Fraser's organization wanted to say thanks to all of the volunteers who support their event each year. He said, "What better way to say thanks than to leave a Lion's Den in their community for the children?"

On Halloween, Fraser and LaFontaine were joined by elite Ironman tri-athletes like Michael Lovato as they gave the kids of the Florida panhandle their best "treat" of the day.

Both of the new rooms feature non-porous Corian® walls, PCs loaded with Microsoft software and XBox 360 games, and supported by an IT infrastructure provided by Cisco Systems. There are now seven Lion's Den rooms in North America.



Michael Lovato and Graham Fraser of NA Sports - Ironman Florida - join LaFontaine as they welcome patients to a new Lion's Den in Panama City, FL.



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## Canadian Society Honors LaFontaine

On a June evening, the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel was filled with hockey luminaries and the Stanley Cup as the Canadian Association of New York honored Pat LaFontaine at its 30<sup>th</sup> annual hockey achievement dinner.



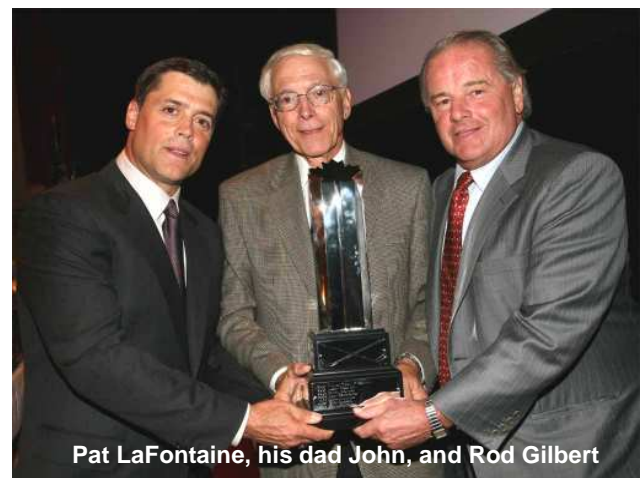
Dinner Chairman Paul Levesque introduced LaFontaine by noting that this was the first time the group had recognized an American player. Previous honorees have included Gordie Howe, "Rocket" Richard, Bobby Hull, Guy Lafleur, Marcel Dionne, Bryan Trottier, Bill Torrey, Al Arbour and Mark Messier.

LaFontaine addressed the crowd that included NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman. "I am privileged to have been able to play this great

game. It has provided so much for me and my family and I am honored to be your honoree tonight."

The evening also featured performances by renowned Canadian tenor, Michael Burgess and emcee Dennis Hull.

LaFontaine dedicated the award to his dad, John, and shared some stories of children he'd met in Lion's Den rooms. He was also grateful that the sport of hockey gave him the opportunity to work with so many other NHLers to help children.



Pat LaFontaine, his dad John, and Rod Gilbert

## Concussion conference has an impact



The National Academy of Neuropsychology held their 28<sup>th</sup> annual Symposium and Conference in New York City in August. Some of the premier neuropsychologists in the world heard first-hand accounts from former professional athletes Pat LaFontaine, Mel Owens and Chris Norwinski about the impact of post-concussion syndrome on their lives.

LaFontaine later delivered the keynote address at the group's gala dinner held at the "Top of the Rock" at Rockefeller Center. He watched as NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and Paul Kelley, executive director of the NHLPA accepted an award from the group for the work the league has done to identify concussions and to begin to address the consequences.

The NHL was one of the first sports leagues to introduce baseline testing as a measure to determine if a player was in jeopardy from returning too quickly after a head injury.

LaFontaine has been a staunch advocate for introducing rules that will strongly curb hits to player's heads. He noted the loss of players such as Simon Gagne and Patrice Bergeron last year after they both suffered post-concussion syndrome. He said, "We can't afford to lose the brightest stars in our game to something that is so easily prevented."

*"No child in the fight for life or health should ever have to go through it alone."*



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## ***Neely, Anderson headline Golf Classic***



The threat of rain and overcast skies quickly dissipated at the exclusive Deepdale Golf Club as Pat LaFontaine hosted the 6th Annual Companions in Courage Foundation Golf Classic under sun-drenched skies on October 6th.

LaFontaine said, "With financial markets in flux, this has been a difficult year for many charity events. We are truly blessed to have so many inspirational 'companions' who made the effort to join us today. The kids in hospitals are the beneficiaries of your generosity."

Dunkin' Donuts and Merrill Lynch served as primary sponsors for the event, which featured two of hockey's most recent Hall of Famers – Cam Neely ('05) and Glenn Anderson, who was formally inducted to the hall in Toronto in November. Karen Meyers, the mother of a former Lion's Den room patient gave a first-person account on the benefits of the room and the Xbox kiosk program to a rapt audience at the dinner.

Each company was represented by some of the elite from their firms, and helped contribute to the raising of more than \$150,000 during the day. LaFontaine, Neely and Anderson led a contingent of celebrities that included fellow Hockey Hall of Famers Mike Bossy, Bryan Trottier, Clark Gillies and Marcel Dionne.

The field of celebrities also included 1980 Olympic goalie Jim Craig, former Toronto Blue Jays first baseman Willie Upshaw, Ron Duguay, Butch Goring, Bob Nystrom, Brian Propp, Ted Nolan and Steve Webb.

Morgan Stanley's Jerry Wood was the overall champ with a score of 73, winning a match of cards with Butch Goring. Don Krause won the Long Drive contest with a bomb on Hole # 11.

The Newedge Securities team captained by Marcel Dionne, that included Sean and Alec McAuley, Brian Callery and Bill Foxen took the low gross team honors. The team of Larry Fitzpatrick, Steve Wirth, Don Krause and Joe Carillo took home second team honors.

LaFontaine thanked all of the major sponsors including, Dunkin' Donuts, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Schroder Investments, Comcast Networks, Neuhaus Realty, Par Plumbing, Lombardi Design, Infrastructure Electric, Newedge Securities, Weeden & Company, Neuberger Berman, the Heagerty Family Foundation and the NHL Foundation.



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## **Companions in Courage:** **Ironmen "Buddy Up" for special friend**

In the six years that Pat LaFontaine has competed in Ironman Triathlons, his generous friends and "companions" have donated tens of thousands of dollars to support the CiC Foundation. But this year in Panama City, Pat decided it was going to be different.

A few weeks before the event, he sent a note to some close friends and asked them for a favor. Rather than make a donation to CiC, Pat asked if they would simply drop a note or a call to their mutual friend Bill Foxen.

Foxen owns a local insurance firm and has been a longtime member of the Huntington Winter Club on Long Island. He was recently diagnosed with Stage-4 cancer, but LaFontaine was quick to point out that treatments seem to be working.

As fellow Winter Club members Doug Partrick and Pete Smith joined LaFontaine in the wee hours prior to Ironman Florida they asked if they could have the initials "B.F." added to their shoulders above their entry numerals. The trio were committed to



**Bill Foxen**



pay a special honor to their friend throughout all 140 miles of the event. On more than one occasion during the grueling race they invoked Foxen's strength to tackle the next mile.

When Foxen heard what his friends had done, he was flabbergasted. He wrote, "I struggle to find words that express how inspirational your continued support is to me. Please understand that your support, the support of the rest of my "hockey family," and my own family has changed my perspective on life. Collectively, you are the driving force to my approach to cancer."

In mid-December, Pat LaFontaine will be recognized as the Heisman Humanitarian of the Year. For more info, please visit [www.CiC16.org](http://www.CiC16.org)