



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2, 2008 REV DRAFT 4

For further information, contact:
Leisa Duff 314-576-3078

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE ANNOUNCEMENT!

UP-AND-COMING INDEPENDENT COUNTRY ARTIST LYAL STRICKLAND TO PERFORM AT THE 6th ANNUAL “DENIM & DIAMONDS” BENEFIT

Proceeds of Gala Event to Benefit World-Renowned Saint Louis University Liver Center

ST. LOUIS, MO.: The Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center have announced a special guest performance by up-and-coming independent country music artist Lyal Strickland at the upcoming 6th annual “Denim & Diamonds” celebration on Saturday, September 20 at the Westport Sheraton, Lakeside Chalet. Lyal will be playing his special set at the VIP Reception for \$10,000+ donors from 5:00 until 6:00 pm the night of the “Denim & Diamonds” event.

Strickland is currently working with record producer Larry Lee (of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils.) He has opened for popular country groups such as SheDaisy and Tracy Lawrence. He has appeared on the nationally syndicated *Jim Bohannon Show*. Lyal has been a multi-year finalist in the Colgate Country Showdown, and he’s played for the opening of the 13th annual Sedona International Film Festival in Sedona, Arizona.

While still in high school, Lyal self-released three CDs. Five songs from those CDs found their way into independent films, and a few of them were adapted for commercials. He was asked to write and record a song for Ronald McDonald House of the Ozarks using the theme of angels. The result was “God Given Tears”, a song about learning to accept and understand life’s challenges.

His newest CD, *Well Fed & High Strung*, is mostly a recording of Lyal performing in an acoustic setting. Strickland will perform selections from his CD at the “Denim & Diamonds 6” VIP Reception.

But this won’t be the first time Lyal and the Saint Louis University Liver Center have crossed paths. Back in 1998 Lyal’s mother was diagnosed with liver disease. It was a frightening time for a 13-year old boy and a single mother; they came to the SLU Liver Center where Dr. Bruce Bacon treated and ultimately cured Lyal’s mother Jacquelyn. Lyal notes, “My mother got answers and a CURE at the SLU Liver Center. Thanks, Dr. Bacon, for giving our family peace of mind!”

The “Denim & Diamonds” event is the annual gala fundraiser, sponsored by Friends of the SLU Liver Center, which supports the research efforts of the world-renowned Saint Louis University Liver Center for the treatment and cure of liver diseases, and promotes understanding and awareness of liver disease. All money raised by the organization stays in the St. Louis area to perform life-saving research and treat patients in St. Louis.

“Each day we are discovering that more people are suffering from liver disease, including hepatitis C and B, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, auto immune liver disease and liver cancer,” said Dr. Bruce R. Bacon, co-founder of the SLU Liver Center. “Many believe there’s little hope after being diagnosed, but there are new treatments and there is hope.”

One of the Center’s better-known patients is Grammy-winner Naomi Judd, who after being diagnosed with hepatitis C, was given just three years to live and now credits Dr. Bacon and his team for saving her life.

Dr. Bacon believes there are critical reasons to support Friends of the SLU Liver Center:

- The Saint Louis University Liver Center enjoys worldwide recognition as a center of excellence.
- Hepatitis C affects 5 million people in the U.S. One in 60 people have hepatitis C, and nearly two-thirds of those people do not know they have it.
- Hepatitis C can be diagnosed with a simple blood test and is curable in about 60% of patients.
- In addition to hepatitis C, there are over 30 other liver diseases which can be diagnosed and for which there are treatments.
- All money raised by the Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center stays in the St. Louis area to support programs in education and research in liver diseases.

The Friends organization has raised and donated more than \$1.6 million for the SLULC since its inception. The funds help support the critical infrastructure of the Liver Center from faculty salaries to visiting professorships and patient-oriented seminars and research. By leveraging the donations of the Friends, the Liver Center is able to use the “seed money” as a match for larger grants from outside sources that generate **\$17 new dollars from outside the region for every \$1 raised locally.**

Tickets for the “Denim & Diamonds 6” gala event are \$200 per person, or a table of ten is available for \$2,000. The Friends organization is also looking for corporate sponsors at various investment levels. Information about sponsorships and ticket reservations are available through the Friends office by calling 314-576-3078

Additional information about the “Denim & Diamonds 6” gala event at Westport Sheraton, Lakeside Chalet hotel can be found at the Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center’s website at www.friendsoftheslulc.org, or by calling (314) 576-3078.

For more information about Lyal Strickland, please visit his website at www.lyalstrickland.com.

###