

## Press Release

July 18, 2008

By Noreen K James

### Double the Strength and Double the Awareness

*Two team up to promote Alpha-1 & Cancer*

On July 19, 2008, Alpha Pack members Katie Schwalbe and Henry Eckert intend to be a team in the Paddle & Portage event on Lake Mendota in Madison, WI. They will be raising awareness for Alpha-1 and cancer. Both Katie and Henry are diagnosed Alphas who have also survived cancer. Currently in her early 40's, Katie has no more than 40% lung function and has participated in several sporting events across Wisconsin. At age 35 and a lung function of 12%, Henry had a double lung transplant in 2005 at UW Hospital in Madison. If you want to participate or observe the event, go to this website <http://www.paddleandportage.org> for more information.

To visit Henry's web page, go to: <http://www.spiderspun.net/blogs/henry.htm>

To visit Katie's blog, go to: <http://k-schwabs.blogspot.com>

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#### **About Alpha-1**

Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (AATD or A1AD) is an inherited condition that causes low levels of, or no, AAT (alpha-1 enzyme) in the blood and occurs in approximately 1 in 2,500 individuals. It is believed that over 20 million people in the U.S. are carriers. AATD is found in all ethnic groups; however, it occurs most often in individuals of European ancestry. This condition can cause lung disease (emphysema) in adults 20-40 y/o and/or liver disease (cirrhosis) in infants. In adults, the first symptoms are shortness of breath with mild activity, reduced ability to exercise, and wheezing. In infants, the first symptoms can include jaundice and swelling of the liver. Rarely, A1AD can cause a skin condition known as panniculitis which is characterized by hardened skin with painful lumps or patches. Panniculitis varies in severity and can occur at any age. Diagnosis of A1AD can be done through a blood test. Severely liver or lung-affected patients may need a transplant due to A1AD. There is currently no cure for A1AD. [www.alphaone.org](http://www.alphaone.org) or [www.genome.gov/19518992](http://www.genome.gov/19518992)

#### **About the Alpha Pack**

The Alpha Pack is a nonprofit Wisconsin organization raising awareness and support for those affected by A1AD. There are currently four meeting locations throughout Wisconsin (Green Bay, Marshfield, Milwaukee, and Siren). Our meetings are open to the public and medical community. [www.thealphapack.org](http://www.thealphapack.org)