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Mark Pellegrino Joins *Supernatural* Co-Star Jared Padalecki in Supporting AttitudesIn Reverse® to Address Mental Health Disorders and Prevent Suicide

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY (August 6, 2016) –In January 2015, Jared Padalecki, star of the hit television program *Supernatural*, began supporting Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™), a New Jersey-based, 100-percent volunteer, nonprofit organization, soon after he lost his best friend to suicide. Both Padalecki and AIR have the mission of preventing others from struggling with mental health disorders in silence and, therefore, preventing suicide. In April of this year, *Supernatural* co-star Mark Pellegrino followed in Padalecki's footsteps both in an unintended, tragic way – he also lost a close friend to suicide – and in a purposeful, inspiring way: He became a supporter of AIR after meeting AIR Co-Founders Tricia and Kurt Baker on the day of the Los Angeles premiere of *Supernatural's* Fan Movie (spnfanmovie.com), which includes an interview with Tricia as part of its feature of the cast and crew's philanthropic endeavors.

When Pellegrino attended the Fan Movie premiere, he had "ironically just returned from my best friend's 'Life Celebration' in Phoenix," he said. "The fact that he had died by suicide was pretty well known and it sparked a heartfelt conversation between Tricia and me. The story of her son's suicide was moving to me in the way only survivors of devastating tragedies understand. Meeting Tricia and her husband inspired me to do what they do, which is to take a tragedy and turn it into a positive for others. That is the most heroic thing a person can do. It's creating a value where there was a loss before. It's making grief productive and purposeful."

"Depression is more common than people think. And, in spite of more universalized acceptance, it's still stigmatized. It's important for people in the throes of mental illness, whether it's situational or a result of brain dysfunction, to understand on some level that they are not alone and that with the proper help, their lives can and will improve," Pellegrino said. "Speaking out in fellowship, the way AIR does at schools, can be a great way for someone at the beginning stages of things to shift course and change from a destructive path to a constructive one. I couldn't do that for my best friend, but maybe someone out there can and will be changed by my experience."

***Supernatural* Fandom Helps AIR Grow throughout U.S.**

"Continuing to grow is a good sign," Pellegrino said, referring to AIR's establishment of chapters in California and Arizona and upcoming chapter launches in Minnesota and Texas. "It's a sign that people are reaching out and trying to change the way they approach this issue. I'm glad that AIR is facilitating that change in the world, and I hope it continues," he added.

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AIR's growth was largely prompted by connections Tricia has made with *Supernatural* fans through Facebook and Twitter, as well as in person. The Minnesota chapter will be launched on August 13, 2016 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Millennium Hotel, Grand Ballroom, 1313 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis.

"We are so grateful to the fans of *Supernatural* and other AIR supporters for their passion for our mission and their commitment to joining us in educating youth to help save their lives," Tricia said. "Suicide used to be the third leading cause of death among 10- to 24-year-olds and recently rose to the second leading cause of death in these age groups. Mental-health education and messages of hope are essential for preventing suicide."

AIR's *Coming Up for AIR™* presentation teaches students the signs of mental health disorders and warning signs of suicide risk. "We encourage students to seek help if symptoms persist for any length of time and we reinforce the fact that these are real, biologically based illnesses. No one should ever be embarrassed to get help for an illness," Tricia said.

"Conversations about mental health disorders and suicide are happening more often and much of the credit goes to Jared Padalecki, Mark Pellegrino and other celebrities. Many people look up to them, so it's especially meaningful that they are serving as positive role models for these critical issues," Tricia added. "We still have a long way to go to eliminate stigma and ensure that everyone gets help when they need it. AIR is immensely grateful to the *Supernatural* cast, as well as members of the crew, especially Mitchel Kosterman, producer of the Fan Movie, and Cliff Kosterman, Jared's security guard, who have shown tremendous support."

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Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR™) was established by Tricia, Kurt and Katelyn Baker of Plainsboro, NJ, in 2010, soon after their son/brother Kenny died by suicide following a long battle against severe depression and anxiety. Their mission is to save lives by educating students about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention. Since January 2011, they have presented to more than 30,000 students in middle and high schools and colleges in New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Missouri. AIR recently began offering Youth Mental Health First Aid instruction. AIR includes the AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™ program, bringing dogs into schools to help students de-stress and engage in the conversation about mental health. In addition, displaced dogs with the ability to serve as Emotional Support Dogs, are matched with individuals who have mental health disorders or developmental disabilities, thereby saving two lives with each match. For more information about AIR™, please visit www.attitudesinreverse.org or call 609-945-3200.