 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Luncheon honors boy, raises money for stem-cell research

By [Lona O'Connor](#)
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, February 07, 2006

BOYNTON BEACH — Adam Susser is a tough little guy, having survived monumental physical problems since his birth. On Monday, a group of friends celebrated the 5-year-old and his parents. He even got his own day, thanks to Palm Beach County Commissioner Burt Aaronson.

Adam, who suffered severe effects of oxygen deprivation during his birth in 2000, has made remarkable progress as a result of stem-cell treatments. He's also become a pint-sized hero for proponents of stem-cell research as a possible cure for spinal paralysis, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, lupus and other conditions.

More local news

[Latest breaking news](#), photos and all of today's *Post* stories.

• [State news](#)

Storm 2006: [Hurricane news](#)

• [Sound off in the forum](#)

• [Columnists](#)

• [Crime, live scanners](#)

• [Photos](#) | [Special reports](#)

• [Weather](#) | [Traffic](#) | [Obituaries](#)

Friends of Adam and the stem-cell cause attended a luncheon in his honor at the Boynton Woman's Club. The luncheon was the first fund-raiser for the Genetics Policy Institute, a nonprofit group that advocates stem-cell research.

Adam was born blind and paralyzed. His twin brother, Brandon, is healthy. Since receiving stem-cell treatments in Mexico, Adam has regained some of his sight and the partial ability to move and speak. Such treatments are waiting federal approval in the United States, but Judy and Gary Susser of Boca Raton were willing to try the controversial therapy outside the country despite its risks.

"We're going to keep on fighting for Adam," said Aaronson, who is leading a statewide campaign asking voters to approve a constitutional amendment that would allow taxpayer money to be used to fund research for embryonic stem-cell research. He hopes to get it on the 2008 ballot.

Aaronson brought along a proclamation, signed by all seven county commissioners, declaring Adam Susser Day in Palm Beach County.

Bernie Siegel, founder and executive director of the Genetics Policy Institute, painted a glowing picture of how embryonic stem-cell therapy could change the face of medicine within 20 years.

"The new pills will be cells," said Siegel. The challenge for stem-cell advocates, he said, was to navigate both questionable science and the intense political and religious campaigns against embryonic stem-cell research.

"The voice of the scientist is drowned out," he said.

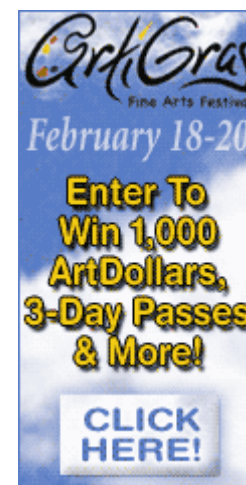
Opponents of embryonic stem-cell research say that because it requires the destruction of an embryo, it is on par with abortion.

Boca Raton businesswoman Susan Cutaia is leading a statewide campaign in opposition to Aaronson's that would keep taxpayer money from being used for embryonic stem-cell research.

Among the accomplishments of the Genetics Policy Institute was advocating for a U.N. treaty favoring stem-cell research and a new initiative to recruit student scientists and lawyers for the cause.


At the heart of it all was young Adam, squealing at all the excitement around him as his father held him on his lap.

"Adam is waging a heroic struggle to gain his health, so he can do all the things other little boys do," said Gary Susser. "The generosity of all of you means so much to me."



Find this article at:

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/politics/content/local_news/epaper/2006/02/07/s3b_stem_0207.html

 **Click to Print**

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.