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*Child and Family
Services
of Michigan, Inc.*

Celebrating 120 years of service to children and families...

PRESS RELEASE

OPERATION GOOD CHEER CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF MAKING CHRISTMAS WISHES COME TRUE

Okemos, Michigan - November 29, 2011 - Statewide social service agency brings Christmas joy to children in foster care across Michigan. Operation Good Cheer, an annual Christmas gift-giving program for children in foster care, will once again launch "Spirit of Good Cheer" flights on December 3, 2011 from Oakland County International Airport to deliver presents to **4,589 children** throughout the state of Michigan.

Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc. (CFSM), the program's coordinator, continues to team with gift donors and volunteers to share the spirit of the season with children who are currently residing in out-of-home placements. Hundreds of volunteers will be on-hand at the airport on December 2-3 to assist with sorting and loading more than **13,000 gifts** for distribution to infants, children and youth across the State [the hanger is graciously provided by Pentastar Aviation]. Gifts are collected from designated "pick-up" locations on December 2, for their journey to the airport via donated ground transportation. On December 3, volunteer pilots fly aircraft packed with Christmas gifts to **18 airports** throughout Michigan, with supplemental ground transport for local destinations. Pilots and drivers are greeted by staff and volunteers from **48 local social service agencies**, who transfer the gifts for final distribution to children served by the agencies. As part of Operation Good Cheer, donors are recruited to purchase, wrap, and deliver Christmas gifts to designated locations. Donors receive a personalized Wish List for each child to help guide purchases. Each participant receives at least three gifts (items ranging from CDs to bicycles and everything in between).

"This is an incredible undertaking that relies on thousands of volunteers and many, many local partners to make it all happen," noted Sharon Vichcales, Administrative Director of Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc., "bringing happiness and hope to thousands of children." "We are especially pleased," she furthered, "to be working with some long-time supporters like Pentastar Aviation and Jerry Drew, the air traffic controller at the airport, who does an exceptional job of organizing the flights, along with Mike Pipia of Guardian Industries who handles all ground transportation."

Related 2011 Data and Statistics:

Operation Good Cheer is a program of Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc., in Okemos. CFSM has sponsored and coordinated this volunteer-driven program **since its inception in 1971**. This year, more than **273 separate donor groups and individuals** are participating as gift sponsors. Donors include individuals, families, employer groups, public schools and universities, and community service organizations. Donors receive a Wish List which contains the enrolled participant's first name, last initial, age, physical and personality profile, and six gifts they would like for Christmas. Donors purchase, wrap, and deliver the gifts to designated drop-off locations. **Various companies donate transportation services**, including trucks and fuel. **Numerous drivers** donate their time to transport gifts to the airport from more than **38 "pick-up" locations in addition to outbound transport from the airport to local destinations. A collaboration of pilots, also utilizing their aircraft and fuel**, will make delivery flights throughout the day to the 18 airport destinations, with many making several trips. **Aircraft and flights** are coordinated by Jerry Drew, Oakland County International Airport air traffic controller. **Ground transportation** is coordinated by Mike Pipia of Guardian Industries.

Local social service agencies taking part in Operation Good Cheer include: Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc., and their member agencies: Child and Family Services of the Upper Peninsula (Marquette); Child and Family Charities (Lansing); Family Counseling & Children's Services (Adrian); and Family Service &

Children's Aid (Jackson). Other agencies taking part include: Alcona/Alpena/Montmorency Department of Human Services (Alpena); Alternatives for Children & Families (Burton); Berrien County Department of Human Services (Benton Harbor); Bethany Christian Services (Holland, Kalamazoo); Blue Water Developmental Housing (Marysville); Catholic Charities of Michigan (Grand Rapids); Catholic Charities of West Michigan-Lakeshore (Muskegon); Catholic Charities of Lenawee County (Adrian); Christ Child House (Detroit); Crossroads for Youth (Oxford); Eagle Village (Hersey); Ennis Center for Children (Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, Port Huron); Fostering Futures (Ypsilanti); Girlstown Foundation (Belleville); Holy Cross Children's Services (Alpena, Clinton, Bedford, Flint, Kalamazoo, Saginaw, Traverse City); I.M.P.A.C.T. (Port Huron); Lenawee County Department of Human Services (Adrian); Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing); Methodist Children's Home (Redford); Monroe County Department of Human Services (Monroe); Spaulding for Children (Southfield); Spectrum Child & Family Services (Southfield); Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan (Marquette); The Children's Center of Wayne County (Detroit); Upper Peninsula Family Solutions (Marquette); Vista Maria (Dearborn Heights); Wolverine Human Services, North Region (Vassar); and Wolverine Human Services, South Region (Detroit).

Airports and respective receiving areas include: Sawyer International- Boreal Aviation; Traverse City- Harbor Air; Alpena County Regional- Terminal; Tulip City- Terminal; Gerald R. Ford International- Northern Air; Muskegon County- Executive Air Transport; Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International- Duncan Aviation; Roben-Hood- Terminal; MBS International- Mid-Michigan Air Center; Lenawee County- Wings of Lenawee; Jackson County-Reynolds Field Terminal; Barstow- Terminal; St. Clair County International- Terminal; Willow Run-Jet Center Lounge; Flint Bishop- AL Flight; Capital Region Airport Authority- AV Flight; Southwest Michigan Regional Airport- Terminal; and Monroe Custer- Terminal.

Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc., is a private, statewide, non-profit organization providing services to nine member agencies, and implements programs including: post-adoption and confidential intermediary services; administration of the Children's Entitlement Fund; and, Operation Good Cheer. Individuals interested in more information about Child and Family Services of Michigan, its programming, or how to make a financial contribution, can visit www.c fsm.org or contact Sharon Vichcales or Sherry Brackenwagen at (517)349-6226.