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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Jamie's Smiles Grants \$3,000 to Help Children with Special Needs

In 2004, an amazingly gentle spirited and loving little boy named Jameson Bates, aka "Jamie", was born with Down syndrome. Devastated that he passed away from a rare seizure disorder in 2006, his parents, Mark and Gretchen Bates, created the "Jamie's Smiles" memorial and endowment funds to help other special needs children like their son and to raise awareness about the value of "special kids" in our community.

Jamie's Smiles is a fund held and administered by Four County Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3), in memory of Jameson Bates. Their mission is to supply supplemental funding to outstanding programs that benefit special needs children, through grants and other financial means. Gretchen Bates said, "We are pleased to share that Jamie's Smiles has released our annual grants in the amount of \$3,000 to help programs assisting children with special needs in our local communities."

On October 21, 2022 the Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP), Glen H. Peters School, and Romeo Community Schools Early Childhood Special Education services, serving a combined total of over 1240 students with special needs in Macomb County, each received a \$1,000 grant for a total of \$3,000 from Jamie's Smiles for current projects and equipment. The money from these grants is for the purchase of items and toys that will promote expressive communication skills, enhance speech therapy, enhance feeding methods for struggling children, therapeutic positioning balls and rolls that will promote skill acquisition and milestone development, as well as flexible and adjustable height seating. Some items will be used on site at their locations and other will be utilized as short-term loan equipment for families to use for child development and in-home teaching.

When asked about their projects Bates said, "I am passionate about helping children, especially children with special needs. These programs are amazing and have adapted their teaching and therapy methods to continue to improve the lives of children with special needs like our son even over these past several unusual years. We support them in their efforts, and we are thankful to have such amazing early intervention programs in our own backyard to continue to help so many children progress and excel."

Bates went on to say, "We are also excited to announce our Holiday Adoption program for families of children with special needs through MIPP. We are adopting families from the MIPP program who are raising children that have special needs. We rely on the support and generosity of people in the community who have a desire to change the lives of others for the better by offering them a hand-up. We invite everyone with a giving heart to join in our mission to change lives and help others, especially those with special needs."

Contributions via PayPal can be made by going to <https://jamiessmiles.org/make-a-donation> then click "Donate Now", input the amount you would like to donate, and finally select "Donate with PayPal". From here, follow the directions to complete your contribution. Of course, you can still send a check made out to "Four County Community Foundation - Jamie's Smiles (Christmas)" to them at: PO Box 539, Almont MI 48003. For more information about Jamie's Smiles, please call 810/798-0909 or visit them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/JamiesSmiles/> or on their website at www.JamiesSmiles.org.

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