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## Will you help Jamie's Smiles make a difference in children's lives this holiday season?

### Dear Friends:

We hope that as we approach the holiday season, you and yours are well and happy! We once again come to you to share that our community needs your help.

This is the Bates family's 26th year of adopting families with our family and friends and our 18th year adopting families through the Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP). We have decided to "completely adopt" one family this year. This year we have chosen to adopt the following deserving family with a Mom (facing life as a single parent, but not by choice), two children and one of the children having special needs:

### Sebastian's Family

We are adopting Sebastian (21 months), his sister Emma (4 years old) and Mom, Heather. They have been in the MIPP program since Sebastian was 4 months old.

Heather and her husband, Eduardo (Dad), were married in 2011. Heather gave birth to their daughter, Emma in 2018. Heather became a stay at home mom to focus on caring for Emma while Eduardo worked construction and nights at Red

Lobster.

In May of 2020, at the height of the pandemic, Heather thought she had come down with COVID. Her COVID test turned out to be negative, but her pregnancy test was positive. At her 20 week ultrasound, it was found that Sebastian had enlarged ventricles in his brain. After he was born, Sebastian was diagnosed with Hypoplasia of the Corpus Callosum.

According to ScienceDirect.com, "The corpus callosum is a large bundle of more than 200 million myelinated nerve fibers that connect the two brain hemispheres, permitting communication between the right and left sides of the brain. Abnormalities within the corpus callosum have been identified in maltreated children." According to Mass General ([Click Here for the whole link](#)), "This is when part of the corpus callosum is missing, usually just the back part. Sometimes it is the middle or front part that is missing instead. Hypoplasia of the corpus callosum. This is when all parts of the corpus callosum form, but the entire structure is very thin or very small."

Since then, Sebastian has also been diagnosed with Congenital Cerebral Ventriculomegaly (enlarged ventricles), Hypoplasia of the Anterior Commissure (connects the two cerebral hemispheres of the brain concerned with the olfactory pathway), and Anemia.

With the suspending of visas and terminating of new citizenship opportunities under COVID, Eduardo lost his fight to gain citizenship. He was subject to voluntary departure in October 2020. Sebastian was born two months later. Since then, Heather has been struggling with medical appointments for both kids, MIPP therapy appointments for Sebastian, and day to day life by herself. The family was able to spend 8 weeks together in Mexico in May 2021 for Eduardo to meet Sebastian and see Emma. They continue to work with lawyers to be reunited as a family, but in the meantime, Heather is managing without any support.

Heather and Eduardo both come from low income homes with limited family support. They pride themselves on building a stable and successful life for themselves and their children. When Eduardo left for Mexico, it took away the security and emotional, physical, and financial support that he had provided to his family. Heather continues to work tirelessly to provide her children with everything they need. She is extremely devoted to her family and attends every appointment and MIPP session. She loves her family fiercely and does everything she can to meet their needs, but navigating life as a single mother she has been struggling to make ends meet.

## Additional Needs

We have also had several other families reach out through MIPP with larger items needs like high chairs, car seats, learning toys, beddings, etc. We will provide these items to additional families as we are able based on our funding this year.

## Can You Help?

As is our custom, we will only come to you TWO TIMES this year via email. Please note that this is our first email and we will send ONLY ONE follow up unless we need to follow up on a pledge from you.

**If you are interested in helping, we hope that you will consider writing out your check or sending a PayPal (see below) immediately so you don't forget. We plan to do the majority of the shopping for our family's needs on November 8th as we have student volunteers helping that day since they are off school.** We will send one additional email with an update on our donation status and then you will not hear from us unless you made a donation or financial pledge that requires follow up or when we send a "*thank you*"!

Whether you can donate \$5 or \$1,000 or more, we will put it to the best use we can and the value that our combined funds and efforts can have to others who are struggling is tremendous. We pool all of the funds and meet as many of the needs of local families as possible.

Kohl's on 26 Mile Road in Shelby Township, generously gives us significant discounts on the merchandise that we purchase in their store. As a result, everything bought at Kohl's costs pennies on the dollar. Often Kohl's has also made a \$500 contribution and they have helped to wrap the gifts for our families. We have requested their help again this year!

We have also applied for matching funds through Wood and we have vendors that give us discounts or support and contribute yearly because they care. If we have more money than we need for this deserving family, we will provide food and clothing gift cards, and large items like car seats to additional families, as there are many others in need in these uncertain times and still more coming forward to ask for assistance. **Last year we were able to help more than 104 additional families with food gift cards alone.**

**Please make checks payable to the "Four County Community Foundation - Jamie's Smiles",** or if you prefer you can also contribute items, but these will not be tax deductible. If you are willing to help, please email us with your commitment as soon as you can.

## Contributions can be made through PayPal!

Contributions via PayPal can be made by [CLICKING HERE](#), input an amount, and select "Donate with PayPal". **Please know that we do NOT pay processing fees on PayPal contributions so this is a super fast and convenient way to make a contribution.**

**To send a check, please make it out to "Four County Community Foundation - Jamie's Smiles (Christmas)" to us at: PO Box 539, Almont MI 48003. We need to know what our budget will be to make purchases, so please help us out by sending your check, PayPal, or email commitment by Friday, November 4th!**

For more information about Jamie's Smiles, please call Gretchen at 586-206-5556 or visit us on [Facebook](#) or on our regularly updated [Website](#) and please bear in mind that we also accept new left over Christmas wrapping paper to wrap the gifts donated and purchased.

**We thought you might be interested in checking out just a couple of pictures of families from previous adoptions below...**

**Thank you for time, consideration and generosity,**

**The Bates Family & Jamie's Smiles  
(Mark, Gretchen, Logan & Sidney)**

*PS By way of background for those of you who are new to the invitation (please bear with us if you have seen this information before), for many years we have championed adopting families of special needs children through MIPP. This is the organization that gave Jameson such phenomenal care and therapy while he was with us and sick with Infantile Spasms. We choose needy families with children with special needs who need a "hand up." Often, people do not realize the financial, physical and emotional burden of raising special children. They are incredible! They are worth it! But fiscally speaking, they can set you back so that you can never recover. In the 19 months that we had Jamie, his care cost approximately \$40,000 out of pocket and we had EXCELLENT insurance. You can imagine what it does to people with lesser insurance, etc. Anyhow, we try to help mitigate some of these costs for as many families as we can every year... Please join us in making a difference in these people's lives...*

[CLICK HERE TO MAKE A DONATION VIA PAYPAL](#)

2021 Adopted  
Child, Gerold  
(One of the  
Triplets) Using  
One of His  
Gifts



**Gerold Enjoying His  
Holiday Blessings!**

2021 Adopted  
Children,  
Dominic &  
Derek (the  
Other Two  
Triplets)  
Opening Gifts



**Dominic & Derek Enjoying  
Opening Presents**

**2020 Adopted  
Mom & Child  
Opening Gifts**



**2020 Adopted  
Child Playing  
with a Gift  
Made Possible  
by Donations  
Like Yours  
through  
Jamie's Smiles**



**2019 Adopted  
Family  
Opening Gifts**







**2018 Adopted  
Family in  
Coats and  
Winter Wear  
provided by  
Jamie's Smiles**

*Please Note: Jamie's Smiles is a fund held and administered by Four County  
Community Foundation.*

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