



Jamie's Smiles "Gift of the Season" begins...

Dear Friends:

I come to you again this year asking for your help. I know that we are all very busy, but I also know how much you care! You have seen the struggle that some families in our community are facing and you want to help.

This is the Bates family's 20th year of adopting families with our family and friends and our 12th year adopting families through the Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP). We have decided to completely adopt two families again this year. As usual, our two families this year desperately need our help! Their kids need more care and special items than most children and they have financial struggles so we have taken on fewer people with greater needs. This year we have chosen to adopt the following deserving families with children with special needs:

Aliana's Family

Aliana's family is comprised of five people. Mom, Anna (age 26), and Dad, Javier (age 30), are married and have been together 11 years. They have three children: Jeni (age 10), Andres (age 9), and Eliana (age 1). All three children have experienced some level of special needs. Their oldest daughter, Jeni, was born with hydrocephalus, cerebral palsy, and later was diagnosed with spastic quad which is a type of muscle spasms. Their son, Andres, was tight in his muscles as a baby and a

toddler and is progressing well. Both Jeni and Andres are thriving. Eliana was born at 36 weeks and weighed 4lbs 12oz. Eliana also had delayed development and is progressing in the right direction, but requires Mom's full-time attention and care.

Because the children require more attention and have more doctors' appointments than most children, Mom stays home to care for them. Javier works, but makes just enough to get by with rent, food and bills. The family is currently renting and in hopes of one day owning a home. Right now, buying a home is just a dream because they currently struggle with buying food and often juggle between fixing the car or buying groceries.

Mom says, "I feel blessed because of how close we are and the strong bond our family has. When it gets hard and it feels like the struggle will never end, we see the blessings in the most important things like us having each other, but it is hard sometimes to see that when you eat Lentils for a week and wish I could offer my children more."

Sloan's Family

Sloan's family is made up of two people. Mom, Monique (age 38), and Sloan (age 16 months). Monique is a single parent and Dad is not involved at all in Sloan's upbringing or care because he is overwhelmed by her illness. After having Sloan, Monique was not able to go back to work immediately because no day care would accept Sloan due to her feeding tube and all of her medical issues. She lost her job. Sloan has speech issues due to laryngomalacia malachia. According to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's website, "laryngomalacia malachia is a congenital softening of the tissues of the larynx (voice box) above the vocal cords....[at birth] The laryngeal structure is malformed and floppy, causing the tissues to fall over the airway opening and partially block it." Sloan has had five surgeries including one for her heart, one to repair a soft cleft pallet, one for the larynx, and two surgeries for Pierre robin sequence where the tongue and jaw are smaller and the jaw does not come forward at birth causing breathing distress. She almost died as a result of breathing distress. Monique does not have any family.

Since the completion of some surgeries that make Sloan more stable. Monique did find a position and has returned to work this past fall. She believes that she has found an appropriate day care that is equipped to support Sloan's new and lessened needs since her feeding tube has been removed. However, she has completely drained her savings. While off, her car was totaled during poor weather conditions and she had to buy a car. The replacement car needs work on it and new tires before winter to make it safe for driving. The little family is currently staying with friends, but they have asked her to find a new place. They helped her get back to work and with watching Sloan so she could start back on her feet and would like her to move on. Monique has found a place to move in to early this November, but they need all of the typical household items that it takes to feed and house a family of two including things like pots, pans, dishes, silverware, furniture, etc. She does have a bed. She also stressed that she is in desperate need of new tires so she has safe transportation for Sloan and to get to and from work, before the weather gets bad as hers are nearly bald.

This year both of our families need: Winter coats, pajamas, winter clothing, shoes, socks, boots, hats, gloves, diapers & wipes, bedding/sheets, some need comforters, books and toys.

As has become 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 one follow up. We hope that you will consider writing out your check immediately so you don't forget. We plan to do the majority of the shopping for our families as soon as we can finalize the details with our corporate sponsor and have collected financial support for the purchases. 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, we will put it to the best use we can and the value that our combined funds and efforts can have to others less fortunate than ourselves is tremendous. We pool all of the funds and meet as many of the needs of these 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 cost pennies on the dollar. For the past several years they also made a \$500 contribution and they helped to wrap the gifts for our families. They have agreed to help again this year!

Additionally, we have other vendors that give us discounts or contributions and contribute yearly because they care. If we have more money than we need for these two deserving families, we will provide food and clothing gift cards to additional families, as there are many others in need and still more coming forward to ask for assistance.

Also, because we ask that checks be made payable to the Shelby Community Foundation: SCF - Jamie's Smiles (Christmas) your contribution is tax deductible (please speak with a tax professional for details). If you prefer you can also contribute items, but these will not be tax deductible. If you are interested in contributing, 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](#), then follow the directions to complete your contribution. Of course you can still send your check made out to SCF – Jamie's Smiles (Christmas) to us at: PO Box 183181, Shelby Township MI 48318 as well. We need to know what our budget will be to make purchases, so please send your check or make your commitment by Monday, November 22nd!

For more information about Jamie's Smiles, please call Gretchen at 586/206-5556 or visit our website at www.JamiesSmiles.org and please bear in mind that we also accept new left over Christmas wrapping paper.

Thank you for time and consideration!

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 a couple of families per year..... Please join us in making a difference in these people's lives...