

Dear Friends:

Halloween is over and directly on its heels are turkey and counting our blessings. If you follow me (Gretchen) on Facebook or know me well, you know that I LOVE random acts of kindness! I am asking you to give in to being random and kind AGAIN this year! ☺ Last year around this same time, in a similar email, we started “Make a Difference Day!” We at Jamie’s Smiles are asking you to once again participate as one of those acts of kindness!

This is the Bates family’s 18<sup>th</sup> year of adopting families with our family and friends and our 10<sup>th</sup> year adopting families through the Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP). We have decided to completely adopt only TWO families this year, down from our previous three. We have struggled over the past several years to raise enough funds for three “complete” adoptions. As usual, our two families this year desperately need our help! Their kids are cold, sick, and hungry for knowledge and food. This year we have chosen to adopt the following deserving families with children with special needs:

### **FAMILY #1**

Mom, Jennifer (age 29) and Dad, Tony (age 41) have a family of five. Struck by more heartache and challenges than any family should, Jennifer and Tony have a child, Anthony (age 2) who has been fighting a rare and life-threatening seizure disorder called Infantile Spasms since shortly after birth. After stopping the dangerous disease for a time through a round of aggressive medical intervention and immune suppressing medication, the seizures have returned. Additionally, a few months ago, Anthony’s brother Royce (age 8) was ALSO diagnosed a life-threatening disease, Leukemia. Sister Neveah (age 10) is healthy and a HUGE help with her sick siblings.

Mom has had to quit her job and schooling in order to care for her ailing boys. Dad is employed full-time, but they are struggling to make ends meet. The family recently lost their home and their growing medical bills threaten all aspects of their finances.

***The Children Need:*** Winter coats, pajamas, winter clothing, shoes, socks, boots, hats, gloves, diapers & wipes, bedding/sheets, books and toys

***Mom & Dad Need:*** Winter coats, winter clothes, bedding, shoes, boots, hat, gloves, comforter and bedding/sheets

### **FAMILY #2**

Single Mom, Angela (age 30) has five children. Struggling to improve the lives of her children, Angela left a life-threatening domestic violence situation to ensure the safety and well-being of her children. Her youngest, Harper (age 1), was diagnosed recently with Cerebral Palsy as well as several other health conditions and significant developmental delays including being unable to walk. Harper’s big brother Latham (age 7) is impaired socially and emotionally and big sister, Abbygale (age 8), has Aspergers and ADHD. Oldest brother, Brandon (age 14) and youngest other sister, Lillyann (age 3), are both average children, but crave attention due to the demands on Mom’s time from the other siblings with special needs.

After years of working in construction and making a good wage, Mom struggles with being unable to provide financially for her children as their needs require her to be at home with them around the clock. Her family pitches in to help as they are able, but Angela's budget is stretched very thin and her children's needs are great.

***The Children Need:*** Winter coats, pajamas, winter clothing, shoes, socks, boots, hats, gloves, diapers & wipes, bedding/sheets, books and toys

***Mom Needs:*** Winter clothes, shoes, boots, hats, gloves, bedding/sheets and a comforter

**This year we elected to downsize on our formal adoptions so that we could come to you only TWO TIMES. We are sending this initial email and will send one follow up. We hope that you will consider writing out your check immediately so you don't forget. We fear that our contacting you multiple times is irritating and do not wish to go that direction. As a result, 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 and 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. Last year 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 memorial fund at 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.**

**NEW THIS YEAR....Contributions can be made through PayPal!** Contributions can be made via PayPal by logging into your PayPal account and sending a contribution to "Friends or Family" then "[Payments@ShelbyCommunityFoundation.org](mailto:Payments@ShelbyCommunityFoundation.org)". If you choose to use this method, please note in the comments that the contribution is for "Jamie's Smiles Holiday Fund. 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 10<sup>th</sup>!**

**Timing is important! We will be making the bulk of our purchases in just two weeks so that we are able to provide our families with outside wear so that they are warm and to get our best discount.**

For more information about Jamie's Smiles, please call 586/909-5305 or visit our website at [www.JamiesSmiles.org](http://www.JamiesSmiles.org) and please bear in mind that we also accept new or 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 ten 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 and with the loss of jobs in our state and the economy being so awful... 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...