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

Dear Friends:

We have been thinking about you and we hope that as we approach the holiday season, you and yours are well and happy! This letter is to share about members of our community that need your help.

This is the Bates family's 28th year of adopting families with our family and friends and our 20th year adopting families through the Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP). We have decided to "completely adopt" one family this year:

Avalynn's Family

We are adopting Avalynn, (18 months), her unborn sister, Mom (33), and Dad (35). This year the Mom shared their journey very eloquently, so we bring you excerpts from Ayla, Avalynn's Mom herself:

"My life changed at my 33 week ultrasound when the doctor noticed that Avalynn had a case of ventriculomegaly. Which means one of her ventricles in her brain was enlarged....once she was born....she was falling behind in milestones.

At nine months we got a genetic test done and that's when we found out

she had this rare metabolic condition called PDCD [*See information below]. We started doing the keto diet which is the main treatment for this condition. Once she was on the diet and in ketosis, she started doing new things.

Then shortly after she was diagnosed with infantile spasms. So we are managing that and continue with her 3:1 ratio keto diet. A diet she will be on for the rest of her life.

She is now a year and a half and thriving at her own pace. She's in all sorts of therapies and making strides daily. I can't wait to see what she accomplishes in the years to come. This is definitely not the life I expected but I know God has hand picked me to be her mama.

And now we are expecting another baby in April 2025. We definitely did not plan this because Avalynn herself is a lot. But again, God entrusted me with these blessings and we will figure this thing out called life."

[CLICK HERE](#) to see information online: "Pyruvate dehydrogenase complex deficiency (PDCD) is a rare genetic disorder that affects the brain and impairs carbohydrate metabolism....PDCD can cause a variety of symptoms, including: Neurological problems like developmental delay, intellectual disability, seizures, and weak muscle tone; Metabolic abnormalities like lactic acidosis, which can cause nausea, vomiting, and breathing problems; and Abnormal brain imaging, like underdevelopment of the corpus callosum or atrophy of the cerebral cortex."

Jamie had Infantile Seizures. According to Nemours KidsHealth, "Infantile spasms is a rare but serious type of epilepsy. It's associated with a unique, very abnormal brain wave pattern that can cause serious harm to a young, developing brain. This seizure type can happen during the first 2 years of life, most commonly between 5–7 months of age." The death rate for this seizure disorder has declined to five percent, but can cause catastrophic related developmental and health issues. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Dad works full-time delivering spices for a family owned company to support his family. Mom stays home full-time to take care of Avalynn who attends the Stilson Center for therapy services.

Additional Needs

We have also had several other families reach out through MIPP with larger items needs like car seats, high chairs, car seats, cribs, crib mattresses, pack and plays, 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 5th as we have student volunteers helping that day since they are off school. We are about to purchase and deliver coats for the family since the weather is changing and it is likely to move significantly colder soon. 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. We have requested their help again this year!

We also 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 and still more coming forward to ask for assistance. **Last year we were able to help more than 54 additional families with food gift cards alone.**

Please make checks payable to the "Four County Community Foundation - Jamie's Smiles", (see address change below) 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)" and PLEASE NOTE that they have moved to 141 South Main Street, Romeo MI 48065. 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 1st!

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 your 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

2023 Adopted
Child: Carsen

**With Some of
His Gifts**



**2023 Adopted
Child: DJ With
Some of His
Gifts**

**2022 Adopted
Child Enjoying
Opening Gifts**



Sebastian with His New Toy

**2022 Adopted
Child Enjoying
Opening Gifts**



Emma Opening Her Stocking

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



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

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