

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - October 15, 2007

Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley Announces Santa's Helpers Program

Seeking Santa's Helpers To Support a Foster Child During the Christmas Season

Methuen, MA – October 15, 2007- Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley (FKMV), a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of foster children in the Merrimack Valley, introduced a new holiday program called Santa's Helpers. Santa's Helpers is volunteer program designed to anonymously match up individuals or groups from the local community with one or more foster children to help fulfill their Christmas wish lists. This program is part of the Annual Foster Kids Christmas Party organized by the FKMV, whereby age appropriate toys are distributed to local foster children with a special gift for each foster mother. The Santa's Helpers program expands the kind of gift-giving to reflect a more meaningful and personal holiday season. The Annual Christmas Party is scheduled on December 15, 2007 at the Sons of Italy in Lawrence, MA.

“Our Annual Christmas Party has been very successful in the past, and the smiles that we see on the children's faces every Christmas are priceless. We have high hopes for this new program to better serve the foster children and their foster families.” stated Larry Giordano, President and Founder of the Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley. “Last year we provided toys and gifts for 95 children and their respective foster mother's. We are hoping that we can raise the bar this year by inviting our community to be a Santa's Helper and show these kids how much our Merrimack Valley community cares.”

What is a Santa's Helper?

We are looking for volunteers including businesses and/or individuals, to sign up to be a Santa's Helper and bring joy to a foster child this holiday season. A Santa's Helper will be anonymously assigned a child and will receive a personal wish list from that child that includes one personal item (i.e., Red Sox sweatshirt) and one age appropriate toy.

The children participating in this program are currently foster children under the care of the Department of Social Services (DSS) in the Merrimack Valley, including Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, and North Andover, ranging from birth to 18 years of age.

The average price estimate per child is \$100. Individuals, groups, or businesses may sign up to sponsor one child or more. Cash donations are accepted in lieu of receiving a Christmas wish list.

Program Details:

October: The sign up process when businesses and individuals volunteer to become a Santa's Helper.

November: Each Santa's Helper will be assigned a child and receive a wish list that will provide the gender and age of the child.

December 1st: All gifts are due and can be dropped off at two locations:

Methuen Karate School
76 Bonanno Court
Methuen, MA

Michaud Insurance
105 Haverhill Street
Methuen, MA

Sign Up Information:

To register as a Santa's Helper, please contact Eileen Giordano at (978) 683-2220, or send an email to egiordano@esmv.org.

Other Donations Needed:

In addition to being a Santa's Helper, the FKMV are accepting the following donations for the Annual Christmas Party: Centerpieces for Tables, Food and Beverages, Mother's Gifts, Holiday Decorations, or cash. Contact Eileen Giordano.

Third Annual Christmas Party:

Date: Saturday, December 15th
Time: 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Location: Sons of Italy
155 Marston St.
Lawrence, MA
More Info: Larry Giordano, (978) 683-2220

About Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of foster children in the Merrimack Valley, including Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, and North Andover. With more than 500 foster children in our local area, they need role models who can make a difference in their lives. Through the efforts of the organization, our goal is to bring a positive influence into the lives of these children and support them as they grow. We offer a range of programs for local foster children of all ages. We work closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to make sure our programs are complementary and needed, and do not overlap with state and federally funded programs. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.fosterkidsmv.org>

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Press Contact:

Juliann Grant
Sentrepity Marketing & Public Relations
Office: 978-681-1600
Email: jgrant@sentrepity.com
Web site: www.sentrepity.com