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Care For Kids Christmas To Make Christmas Brighter for Area Kids in Need *With Requests for Assistance up 40 Percent, Program to Provide 'Hope for Every Heart, A Gift For Every Child'*

(Branson, Mo. 11-27-09) Making Christmas brighter for area kids in need is the goal of a new program - *Care for Kids Christmas*. Responding to reports that requests for assistance are up 40 percent this year, the Silver Dollar City Foundation and Branson's Hometown Radio in conjunction with Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC), have launched *Care for Kids Christmas* to help families who are in need now more than ever.

"Requests for assistance are up significantly -- 40 percent this year, with families struggling to provide just the basics for their kids," said Anita Prochnow, Director of Love INC. "Half of those families have not asked us for help before, but with the current economy, needs are greater than ever and there is little left over for Christmas gifts for the kids." Love INC, which handled applications for assistance from 800 area families with 2,000 kids last year, had received hundreds of applications before the application period had even begun this year, Prochnow said.

With those figures in mind, *Care for Kids Christmas* hopes to provide gifts for nearly 3,000 area kids this year. The goal is to collect and distribute enough new toys and gifts this holiday season that every area child in need can receive a few gifts – a message that the community cares, said Silver Dollar City Foundation President John Baltes.

Anyone wanting to help can donate a new toy or gift item for a child, from infants to age 18. Unwrapped gifts can be dropped off at one of three area collection points before December 14. Gifts will be distributed by Love INC December 16-18. Cash donations can be taken to the Hometown Radio office in Branson or made online. Funds will be used to purchase gifts, and all cash donations are tax deductible.

Collection points for gifts are: the Hometown Radio office in downtown Branson, the Southern Stone County Fire Protection District Fire Station in Branson West, and Crane City Hall. Information, days and times are posted on the website www.careforkidschristmas.com.

Families in need can apply for assistance through the Love INC office, 417-336-7056.

The Silver Dollar City Foundation's *Care For Kids* program seeks to meet the physical, mental and emotional needs of kids in the Stone and Taney county communities. For more information about Care For Kids, visit www.silverdollarcityfoundation.com.