

Date: December 10, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**More than 130 local Girl Scouts
think inside the box to help chronically ill children**

Nearly 1,000 chronically ill children will receive the gift of play thanks to the efforts of local Girl Scouts working on a special community service program called the Girl Scout Care-athon. The Care-athon will culminate on January 20, 2005, at a special event to launch the 2005 Girl Scout Cookie Program.

Throughout December and up until January 20, Girl Scout troops throughout the area will be assembling "Jared boxes." A Jared Box is a plastic shoe box filled with small gifts - new items such as toys, playing cards, and games, which provide children with something to do while traveling to appointments, sitting in waiting and exam rooms, and spending time in the hospital.

Locally, the following 13 troops will participate:

- Brownie Girl Scout Troops #66, #394 and #482, Junior Girl Scout Troop #218, and Cadette Girl Scout Troop #1271 of Drexel Hill;
- Brownie Girl Scout Troops #372 and #1259, Cadette Girl Scout Troop #375, and Senior Girl Scout Troop #501 of Havertown;
- Brownie Girl Scout Troops #819 and #407 of Springfield;
- Brownie Girl Scout Troop #239 of Newtown Square; and
- Brownie Girl Scout Troop #1114 of Yeadon.

Four of the local troops, Junior Girl Scout Troop #218 and Brownie Girl Scout Troops #66, #482 and #394, will assemble more than 50 Jared boxes on Wednesday, December 15, from 3 to 4 p.m. at Saint Andrews School in the Monsignor McGettigan Hall, 529 Mason Avenue, Drexel Hill. Saint Andrew's students partnered in this effort by donating the items the girls will pack.

"The girls are very excited about this project and the opportunity to help boys and girls their age. Community service is a big part of their lives," said Claire Martorana, leader, Brownie Girl Scout Troop #66 of Drexel Hill.

In all more than 90 troops from Delaware County, Philadelphia County and eastern Montgomery County will participate in the Girl Scout Care-athon.

2005 Girl Scout Cookie Program

Why has a community service project been selected for the kick-off event for the Cookie Sale? That's easy. When consumers buy Girl Scout cookies they are not only buying a delicious dessert, but also providing the opportunity for a girl to enjoy the Girl Scout experience and a big part of that experience is gaining values and learning through community service.

At the event held at the Rotunda at The Shops of Liberty Place, 1625 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, all the Jared boxes assembled by Girl Scouts in advance -- more than 600 -- will be distributed to medical facilities and pediatric organizations along with 300 more boxes which will be assembled at the event by more than 50 Girl Scouts and adult volunteers. This project represents the highest volume of boxes produced by any one organization by more than 300 boxes. The old record was 556.

The medical facilities and organizations who will receive Jared boxes include: the American Academy of Pediatrics, Shriners Hospital for Children, Saint Christopher's Hospital for Children, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Ronald McDonald House of Philadelphia, Temple University Children's Medical Center, Crozer-Chester Medical Center, Bryn Mawr Hospital, and the Pediatric Medical Association of Abington.

Many businesses and corporations are making product donations to support the Girl Scout Care-athon event, including A.C. Moore of Montgomeryville, Pa., Binney-Smith (Crayola)

of Easton, Pa., Fencor Printing Co. of ###, Pa., K-NEX Industries, Inc., of Hatfield, Pa., Random House Books of New York, N.Y., Rubbermaid of Fairlawn, Ohio, and the United States Playing Card Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Jared Box Project

The Jared Box Project honors Jared, a five-year-old boy from State College who battled an incurable brainstem tumor. He carried a backpack full of toys and games to all appointments and questioned why the other children didn't do so. To date, groups in 25 states have made and donated more than 8,000 Jared boxes.

"I have witnessed children receiving Jared boxes. I wish I could share the smiles, love and fun that are on their faces and in their hearts," said Ruth A. McMullen, Jared's mother. "The boxes made for the Care-athon will provide many more children with the gift of play and the knowledge that they are in the thoughts of others who care about them as they struggle with their illness."

Serving eastern Montgomery, Philadelphia and Delaware counties, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania is one of more than 300 Girl Scout Councils in the United States. The Council's 4,900 adult volunteers serve almost 20,000 girls in troops/groups, special activities and camp programs.

For more information, call Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania at (610) 853-2266 in Delaware County and (215) 564-4657 in Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties or log on the GSSP web site at www.gssp.org.