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For Immediate Release:

Giving Tree Project Supports Basic Needs at CHNK

Covington, KY –It was November 2011, and Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky needed laundry detergent. CHNK’s then Vice President for Development Rick Wurth was thinking about this need as he stopped at his dry cleaner after work one evening, and what started as an offhanded question has grown into community-wide holiday support for the youth served by the Home.

“I asked the team at Mauri-Lou Dry Cleaners if they’d host a Giving Tree for CHNK,” explains Wurth, now chief executive officer for the Home. “But I explained that we didn’t need toys or games – Santa is always very generous with our boys on Christmas morning. What we needed was help with some basic necessities, like toothpaste and toilet paper and detergent ... items that need to be replenished regularly when you’re providing 24/7 care to 40 boys at any given time.”

The Erlanger business jumped on board with the idea and put up a Christmas tree right near their pick-up counter, where customers were sure to see it. Several other businesses with connections to Home followed suit, placing trees in waiting rooms, offices, and front lobbies. CHNK’s Office for Development designed the gift tags– each listing a specific need for the Home – then handed them off to participating businesses to hang on their Christmas trees as ornaments. Customers, clients, and employees of the businesses were then encouraged to take a tag, purchase the item on it, and return the item to the business for pick-up by the Home.

Now in its third holiday season, CHNK’s Giving Tree Project has nearly 20 businesses participating this year, including AirWay Technologies, The Bank of Kentucky (Ft. Wright), BelFlex Staffing, Braxton’s Cleaners, Candyse Jeffries Orthodontics, Cengage Learning, Citi, Hebron Chiropractic, Liquor City (Florence), Red Zone, Reminiscent Herb Farm, Republic Services, The Dermatology Center, Mauri-Lou Dry Cleaners, Mercedes-Benz of Ft. Mitchell, and Wings on Wheels. One of the businesses, Mercedes-Benz of Ft. Mitchell, will host a brief presentation on Friday, December 19 to celebrate the holiday partnership between their team and CHNK, as well as to officially deliver the donations to the Home.

Don Paparella, managing partner at Mercedes-Benz of Fort Mitchell and a member of CHNK’s Board of Trustees, said, “It is truly a great pleasure to join so many area businesses in supporting this effort and the boys at CHNK. Having access to everyday essentials is something that is easy to take for granted. We commend the Home for having the foresight to create a means for satisfying this type of need.”

The personal hygiene items, clothing, bedding, cleaning supplies, and other items collected via the Giving Trees will help the Home offset operational expenses that are not reimbursed by the state of Kentucky. And while the largest response comes during the holiday season, CHNK considers itself fortunate to have church groups, civic organizations, and individuals who also assist with these needs throughout the year.

“It’s not uncommon for me to get calls asking what we need at a particular time. So we post a ‘Wish List’ of items on our agency website that folks can use as a guide,” shares Anne Sturgis, CHNK’s development manager. “We try to make it as easy as possible for the community to support us, so we even have gift registries at Target, Walmart, and Amazon that allow supporters to order items online and ship them directly to us.”



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The latter option is something that Rev. Peter D'Angio, rector at Trinity Episcopal Church and subject matter expert on CHNK's Board of Trustees, finds to be an easy vehicle for providing support. Last month, D'Angio used Amazon's Subscribe & Ship feature to set up a monthly donation of Tide Pods that are delivered right to CHNK's front door.

"Giving can be quick and easy simply by extending the reach of services you use every day," reflects D'Angio. "I'm a big fan of online shopping, and with this particular service, it's one click and now every month CHNK receives something it needs. I help the Home, and I don't even have to remember to shop!"

CHNK estimates that the in-kind donations received this holiday will last for several months. But the need is always there. Community members interested in helping the Home with daily, ongoing supply needs are encouraged to visit www.chnk.org/wish-list or to contact the Office for Development at 859.292.4135 for additional ideas.

Founded in 1882, Children's Home of Northern Kentucky operates two campuses – one in Burlington, KY and the other in Covington, KY. CHNK carries out its mission to be a community leader providing children and families with opportunity and hope for better lives by offering residential and community-based treatment programs for abused, neglected, and at-risk children. Last year, the Home impacted over 700 children and families in 36 counties across the Commonwealth. CHNK is a member of the Children's Alliance, Kentucky's voice for at-risk children and families.

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For more information about Children's Home of Northern Kentucky, please visit www.chnk.org or contact Rick W. Wurth, Chief Executive Officer, at 859.292.4177 or 859.468.5418.