

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Families Share their Gratitude to Secret Santas**

**Woodbury** – “I have a confession! I opened the gift bag with a brand new winter coat in just for me. I’m a little embarrassed to admit I haven’t owned a winter coat in over 10 years, only a zip up hoodie. I wore the coat last night as I stepped out into the cold for my first night back at work after a major surgery. I never felt the cold; my new coat was so warm and toasty. I feel like I should have written an even bigger thank you note to our Secret Santa. Thank you too for helping our family this year. I pray that I can pay it forward next year.”

“Those words melted my heart as I read them. The note came from a mom whose family was sponsored this Christmas season,” said Child Advocacy Center Family Services Coordinator Jennifer Gamble.

Every December, the Child Advocacy Center comes alive with the magic of Christmas. Every morning this week, Secret Santas dropped off presents for needy children. In the afternoon, smiling parents and grandparents picked up the gifts for their children and grandchildren. Some were moved to tears.

“The Child Advocacy Center wants to thank all of the Secret Santas for being part of the magic of Christmas,” said Child Advocacy Center director Sharon De Boer. “You will never know how much this meant to the families you helped. It humbled and amazed our staff that during a pandemic with so much uncertainty, people found it in their hearts to be Secret Santas to needy children. It is awe-inspiring to know that boys and girls, who just experienced the most difficult year of their lives, are going to have a joyous Christmas.”

The Child Advocacy Center responds to child abuse cases as a multidisciplinary team with the Department of Children’s Services, law enforcement, and the District Attorney’s Office. The children who were sponsored for Christmas were child abuse victims, child sexual abuse victims, and children who were exposed to their parent’s drug use.

“The Child Advocacy Center deeply appreciates each one of our Secret Santas,” said Cannon County Coordinator Amanda Hammond. “You have enriched Christmas for needy families and made a difference in the lives of child abuse victims. Thank you for being a blessing to others. We wish you a joyful holiday season!”

It is not too late for YOU to become a Secret Santa. For more information contact the Child Advocacy Center in Rutherford County at (615) 867-9000 or in Cannon County at (615) 563-9915. They are still accepting gift cards to distribute to needy families.

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**Attachment:** Photographs of Secret Santa's dropping off gifts for needy children.