



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Child from Chatham will represent Illinois in nation's Capitol
*Lydia Hannah will visit Capitol Hill to share her remarkable medical experience
as part of Children's Miracle Network program*

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Illinois is sending a new representative to the nation's capitol this March, but this young ambassador isn't a politician. Lydia Hannah, 9, from Chatham, will visit The White House and Capitol Hill to share her story of medical victory and will represent children treated at Children's Miracle Network hospitals throughout the U.S.

Lydia, who is treated for Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) at St. John's Children's Hospital, will join child ambassadors from every state as part of Children's Miracle Network Champions Across America presented by CO-OP Financial Services. The program honors remarkable children like Lydia who have triumphed despite severe medical challenges. With the help of their Children's Miracle Network hospitals, a toddler conquered spinal cancer, a young girl survived a deadly bacterial infection, and a small boy overcame severe burns from a fast-moving house fire.

In 2002, Lydia was diagnosed with ALL in her bone marrow. After a two-and-a-half-year chemo regiment, Lydia was set for her last treatment and a celebration party to follow, when the news came that the cancer was back, this time in her central nervous system. Although this heart-wrenching news would devastate most children (and adults), Lydia confronted it with grace and dignity. She continues to undergo treatment at St. John's Children's Hospital under the care of SIU pediatric oncologists Greg Brandt, MD, and Daniel Niebrugge, MD.

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“I never cease to be amazed at the incredible strength and courage these Champion children display,” said Tracy Byrd, country music artist and active Children’s Miracle Network supporter. “Each one’s life is a testament to the phenomenal pediatric care being provided at Children’s Miracle Network hospitals.” Byrd will accompany Champion children to Washington, D.C., then to Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.

In Florida, Champions will meet Children’s Miracle Network sponsor, hospital and media partners who all convene to celebrate a year of medical miracles during the Children’s Miracle Network Celebration event at Walt Disney World Resort.

Also joining Lydia and other the Champions during their travels will be Miss America 2007 Lauren Nelson. “What an honor to spend a few days getting to know these incredible children,” said Nelson. “I look forward to meeting each child and helping them share their remarkable stories with the entire country.”

CO-OP Financial Services proudly sponsors the Champions Across America program on behalf of America’s credit unions and their commitment to children in their community.

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About St. John’s Children’s Hospital

St. John's Children’s Hospital combines the faculty resources of SIU School of Medicine with the pediatric facilities and services of St. John’s Hospital. The mascot election occurs one year after St. John’s Children’s Hospital was recognized by the National Association for Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI). The Children’s Hospital Web site is www.sjchildrens.org.

About Children’s Miracle Network

Children's Miracle Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children by raising funds for children’s hospitals across North America. Each year the 170 Children's Miracle Network hospitals provide the finest medical care, life-saving research and preventative education to help millions of kids overcome diseases and injuries of every kind. To learn more go to www.childrensmiraclenetwork.org.

About CO-OP Financial Services

Established in 1981 and located in Ontario, Calif., CO-OP Financial Services is wholly-owned by its credit union shareholders and provides volume discounts on products and services that include ATM network access, ATM processing, debit/card services and shared branching. With nearly 2,000 credit union members, more than 25,000 surcharge-free ATMs (including 6,000 deposit-taking), 100 million-plus monthly transactions and 24 million cardholders, CO-OP Financial Services is the No. 1 credit union EFT network and processor in the U.S. financial services industry. CO-OP Financial Services’ membership has access to over 800,000 ATMs worldwide through links to NYCE, STAR, Cirrus, Pulse and Plus.