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March 9, 2010

Community Partners,

Over the years and even this past summer, we have asked you to help us contact our legislators to communicate the importance of our services to children and families. These efforts can help ensure that funding cuts to our programs are minimal and, once again, we need your assistance!

This year we are using the advocacy letter, "PINning Our Hopes On You," which was developed by Catholic Charities, Counseling & Family Services, Lutheran Social Services and Children's Home. The letter is being disseminated by the Heart of Illinois United Way as well as other local human service providers. Our message is certain to capture the attention of our elected officials in Springfield as they struggle with the State budget again this spring.

The situation in Springfield is dire and we need your help to preserve the safety net for the State's most vulnerable citizens. I cannot stress enough how critical it is for each of you to be involved in this year's advocacy process. The children and families in our community are counting on you to make sure their voices are heard!

To demonstrate just how much of an impact advocacy can have, I would like to share with you a very real situation that recently occurred:

I became aware of legislation that a local legislator was sponsoring that would essentially do away with special education programs like our own Kiefer School. I immediately arranged a meeting with the legislator and, along with Connie Hamann and a representative from IAPSEC (Illinois Association of Private Special Education Centers), met with him to discuss the impact this legislation would have on organizations like Children's Home and on our children and families.

I am happy to share with you that as a result of our meeting, the legislator has withdrawn his sponsorship of this legislation. He also promised us that if an amendment is filed that attempts to circumvent the committee process, he will inform us so that we are not blindsided by legislative maneuvering.

By taking the time to advocate for our program and for the children and families it serves, we not only changed his perspective, but were able to move him to "our side." This is a major advocacy victory saving the funding (approximately \$180 million) for our public schools. They will now be able to afford the cost of non-public special educational facilities (such as Kiefer School) that serve children who are unable to be served in the public school setting.

Our voices need to be heard! Please join me in advocating for the exceptional services we provide to children and families. This will be one of several efforts occurring over the next several months and I will do my best to keep you abreast of any developments and ask for your support when necessary. I can assure you that your efforts are critical!

I am providing the names and addresses of our local legislators for your convenience. If you do not know whose legislative district you are in, please go to the State of Illinois website and enter your address. You will then be given a list of the State Representatives and Senators in whose district you reside. That link is: <http://www.elections.illinois.gov/DistrictLocator/SelectSearchType.aspx?NavLink=17>.

Honorable David Koehler
Illinois State Senate
State House Room 311B
Springfield, IL 62701

Honorable David R. Leitch
Illinois House of Representatives
State House Room 220
Springfield, IL 62701

Honorable Dale Risinger
Illinois State Senate
State House Room M103F
Springfield, IL 62701

Honorable Michael Smith
Illinois House of Representatives
Stratton Office Building Room 245-E
Springfield, IL 62701

Honorable Jehan Gordon
Illinois House of Representatives
Stratton Office Building Room 282-S
Springfield, IL 62701

Honorable Keith Sommer
Illinois House of Representatives
Stratton Office Building Room 216-N
Springfield, IL 62701

In advance of your efforts, I appreciate everything you do to ensure that our voices are heard. Thank you for your support of our agency, our mission and especially our children and families! As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions at cletew@chail.org.

Respectfully,



Clete Winkelmann
President & CEO

We're PINning Our Hopes on You!

Dear

As a voting member of your district, I am going to support legislators who work hard to advocate for three critical goals in this time of crisis in Illinois:

- **P**reserve effective human service systems
- **I**nsist on a responsible and timely revenue plan
- **N**egotiate reasonable compromises between polarized factions of the legislature to achieve solutions

Our state's systems for providing a high quality of life - education, health care, commerce, law - work for most people most of the time. But for many of us, because of illness, disability, old age or poverty, the human service systems are absolutely essential for meeting basic needs and recovering from life's setbacks. Almost all of Illinois' 4.6 million families have at least one member who relies on human services at least once in his or her life.

Not only are Human Services proven to help people to meet their full life's potential, they also contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to the local economy, stimulating local business, housing and adding to the tax base. Cutting funding for human services does not truly save money because the people with needs don't go away - they get worse without help. Their problems just end up being served down the road by other, dramatically more expensive parts of the public system, such as jails, foster care, nursing homes and residential programs which will cost us all much more. Now is the time for you to do the right thing for vulnerable Illinois citizens who are pinning their hopes on you.

***Thank you for your efforts to build a better Illinois -
we're PINning our hopes on you!***

Sincerely,

(IMPORTANT: Please sign AND include your complete mailing address.)