



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Annual Telethon Supports Critical Services for Children and Families**

The 21st annual Shodair/Children's Miracle Network Celebration broadcast takes place Saturday, May 30 from 11:00 a.m. to 11:05 p.m. The event is broadcast live from Shodair Children's Hospital in Helena on CBS affiliate stations around the state.

The telethon broadcast from Shodair is part of the international Children's Miracle Network celebration broadcast. Proceeds from the Shodair telethon stay in the state to support vital health care services for children and families in Montana. Shodair is one of 170 premier children's hospitals affiliated with Children's Miracle Network. The non-profit hospital helps children of all races, ages, religions, and financial backgrounds, providing specialized psychiatric care and medical genetics services.

Viewers in Montana will hear inspiring stories of dedication and courage from families and children who triumphed over significant challenges to their health and well-being. One of those is eleven year-old Zach Bell of Great Falls, a former psychiatric patient at Shodair and Montana's representative in the national Champions Across America program. Lesli Furniss, Miss Rodeo Montana 2009, and Victoria Valentine, Miss Montana's Outstanding Teen 2008, will also be on hand for the live broadcast from Shodair, as well as many of the 2009 Miss Montana state finalists.

The broadcast has attracted a variety of television personalities over the years, including Norma Ashby, Shannon Everts, and Jill Valley. It now includes five co-hosts from each of the Montana television stations on the MTN Network. Dan Snyder, a long-time on-air host from Kalispell, will return again this year for his final telethon hosting duties. Snyder, who has been associated with the broadcasting industry in Montana since 1948, became involved with Shodair's telethon in 1989, when he was its first on-air host.

The Celebration telethon is an annual fundraising event for Children's Miracle Network hospitals across the nation and Canada. The international television special, live from Walt Disney World, is broadcast over a network of some 200 television stations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It is one of the largest television fund raisers in the world, annually benefiting 14 million children. Unlike most other national fundraisers, funds raised during Children's Miracle Network events stay and support services in the states where they were raised.

Viewers are invited to tune in to their local CBS stations and call between 11:00 a.m. and 11:05 p.m. on May 30. In Helena, the phone number is 449-2130. Statewide, callers can phone toll-free at 1-800-798-9339. All pledge dollars stay in the state and help assure that critical health care services remain available to children in Montana.

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