

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 2009

Contact: Anastasia Burton, Shodair Children's Hospital – 406/444-7561

\*Photo available upon request



### Great Falls boy represents state, children's health care needs in national program

HELENA—Zachary Bell loves to fish—any kind of fishing, in fact. This passion has been incorporated into his regular therapy for major depression. Now when Zach is faced with a stressful situation, he describes his feelings as needing “fishing time.” It’s a huge step in his treatment.

Zach wasn't always able to separate himself from difficult positions. In 2006, Zach was dealing with some major stressors, which made his psychiatric symptoms more serious and even potentially dangerous. Zach was hospitalized in the acute psychiatric care unit at Shodair Children's Hospital in Helena, where he was diagnosed with three psychiatric conditions: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and major depression. Zach spent four months at Shodair, where he received intensive psychotherapy, medication, and individual, group, and family therapies for his depression.

Like any chronic illness, Zach knows that depression may be a life-long battle. This brave young man is up for the challenge. Zach continues with outpatient therapy as well as medication management and today is a confident and creative fifth grader who is embracing life.

The courageous way he has addressed the challenges related to his condition is why Zach has been named Montana's 2009 *Champion Across America*, representing the state and Shodair Children's Hospital. He joins 49 other young ambassadors from across the nation participating in the Children's Miracle Network's *Champions Across America* program, which is sponsored this year by Walmart and Sam's Club. Walmart's support for the Children's Miracle Network began in 1987. Since that time, Walmart and Sam's Club associates, customers, and members have raised more than \$460 million for children's hospitals.

Zach and his grandmother, along with the champions from other states, depart on March 17 for a trip to Washington D.C. and Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, where they will be honored in a series of events. Before departing for Orlando and Washington D.C., Zach was recognized during a special send-off event on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at the Great Falls Walmart. Zach was also honored with proclamations from the 2009 Legislature as well as the City of Great Falls.

The champions from all 50 states and Canada represent children's health care needs and hospitals that provide critically-needed care to young patients throughout the nation. Children's Miracle Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children by raising funds for premier children's hospitals across North America. Shodair is Montana's only Children's Miracle Network Hospital, and provides genetic testing, counseling, and risk assessments to patients of all ages throughout the state, and residential and acute psychiatric care to Montana children and adolescents.

