

Accounting firm spreads cheer to children in care

(Dec. 19, 2005) ...The offices of accounting firm Meyers Norris Penny looked like Santa's workshop lately as staff prepared hundreds of gifts for children in care.

On Dec. 19, the company donated Christmas stockings, each filled to the brim with presents, for the more than 130 children in the care of Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority. These are all children who are unable to be with their natural families due to concerns about neglect or abuse.

The idea began with the Brooks office of Meyers Norris Penny last year. Staff at that location provided gifts for all of the children in care in that community and the surrounding area. The idea caught on and spread to the company's other offices in the region as well.

"Throughout the year, but especially at Christmas, the team members of Meyers Norris Penny are looking for opportunities to contribute on a social level in the community and help out those less fortunate," says Robert Belau, Partner, Meyers Norris Penny LLP.

"In addition to our regular charitable activities, the team really wanted to somehow make Christmas just a little bit better for a large number of individuals. As such, we felt that being able to provide Christmas gifts and stockings to those children that the Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority works with would be both exciting and worthwhile. At the end of the day, a smile on a child's face is priceless," says Belau.

Employees provided cash donations individually, which were matched by the local office of Meyers Norris Penny. Armed with a list of the gender and age of each child, team members then volunteered their time to purchase and wrap the gifts and fill the stockings. Management and staff personally delivered the presents to the Brooks and Medicine Hat offices of the Child and Family Services Authority so they could be distributed to the children.

Kathy Cooper, Board Co-Chair of the Child and Family Services Authority, praised the company and its employees for their generosity. "This act of kindness will have a lasting impact that extends beyond Christmas day," she says. "You never know how much this means to child."

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"Many of these children have been through a lot in their young lives," says Co-Chair Ken Serr. "These gifts will help make the holiday brighter for them."

Under the mandate of Alberta Children's Services, Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority provides a wide range of services and programs to strengthen families and keep children and youth safe, including: child intervention services (family enhancement and protection); child care licensing and subsidy; family support for children with disabilities; prevention of family violence and bullying; prevention of child sexual exploitation; foster care; adoption and permanency planning.

-30-

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