

ST. VINCENT'S CENTER

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January 18, 2008

Ms. Phyllis Pritchett
Greater Baltimore Maryland Chapter of ARMA
P. O. Box 207
Simpsonville, Maryland 21150

Dear Ms. Pritchett and friends at ARMA,

Happy New Year! On behalf of the children of St. Vincent's Center, we would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$1,222.50 and gift cards totalling \$250.00 that we received in December, 2007. The tremendous outpouring of love and support that we received this year will help to create a brighter, happier future for the children in our care.

One of the things we get asked a lot from our holiday donors is if we can take photos of the kids getting their Christmas presents so they can share in the experience of Christmas morning at St. Vincent's. Unfortunately due to confidentiality issues that is not possible. However as I reflected on the season, several snapshots of the holidays really stand out in my mind and I wanted to share them with you.

As part of the holiday celebrations several of the children participated in our children's choir and they put on a concert for the facility. The opening song and the name of the evening was "Our House Is a Holiday House." My heart was filled with such joy (and my eyes full of tears) as I watched the eighteen children sing with such enthusiasm. I was struck with the overwhelming feeling that *our house really is a holiday house*. For so many of the children this is the very first time they have ever experienced the excitement and fun of Christmas morning and all of the other great things that go along with the holidays. Thank you so much for fulfilling their wishes and giving them a reason to sing.

Another favorite snapshot is the image of four year old Dajour on Christmas morning. As he opened each and every present, he raced around the room holding the toy over his head so he could show his staff and the other children what he got. He was so happy with his amazing presents. The adults in the room laughed so hard that they too were brought to tears. Thank you so much for giving him a memory that he will take with him for the rest of his life.

Thank you again for
all your support of
the children!
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Child & Family Services Division: St. Vincent's Center • Center for Family Services • Villa Maria • Catholic Charities Headstart



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This year brought a lot of special treats for the children. One of them was a glorious display of Christmas trees (nine in all) and other decorations that were created by a team of fabulous florists. Jake and his crew literally transformed our gymnasium into an amazing winter wonderland. The entire production took two and a half days to complete and we locked the gym to keep the kids from seeing the final production until their holiday party. I stood at the door and watched their faces as they saw the display for the first time. I can honestly tell you that it blew their minds. Isis, a little girl who had arrived only a few days before exclaimed "I LIKE this place." But my favorite response was from Tyler. This little boy is one of the saddest kids I have ever met. He rarely smiles and he seems to carry the weight of the world on his little shoulders. When he saw the display he was absolutely giddy with delight. He kept saying over and over, "oh wow, oh wow. oh wow." And then he turned to me and said repeatedly, "Thank you, Miss Ellen, thank you. Thank you, Miss Ellen, thank you." I laughed and said, "Honey, do you know what my part in all of this was?" He shook his head no and I said, "All I did was open the door and they (the florists) did all the work."

Thank you for coming in that door as well. Thank you for being one of the dedicated "angels" who came to us for the sole reason of bringing joy to these children. We are so honored to have the overwhelming love and kindness of each of our "angels" who bless us with an abundance of presents and stockings and financial support, not only for the holidays but all year long. We would never be able to provide the quality of care that the children need if it were not for you and your generosity. Thank you for letting our children know that they are loved and cherished and that they do deserve to have a day and, more importantly, a *life* filled with joy.

Please, come back and visit us again and again and remember that our door is always open to you. We wish you and all of those dear to you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Thanks for Caring,



Ellen Torres, CFRE
Dir. of Development



Patricia Carter
Development Associate



Beth Zeitler
Development Associate

Please retain this letter for your records. As a result of Federal Income Tax laws, you may be required to submit this written acknowledgement to the Internal Revenue Service to substantiate your support. Federal law requires us to inform you that you have received no benefits in exchange for this gift.