

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Margo Sutorius @ (815) 899-0137

msutorius@childrenshomeandaid.org

**CHILDREN'S HOME + AID RECEIVES SAY IT OUT LOUD CAMPAIGN
GRANT TO RAISE AWARENESS AND PROMOTE GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN
DEKALB COUNTY**

DeKalb (**February 8, 2010**) Children's Home & Aid announces it is the recipient of a \$10,000 "Say It Out Loud" grant from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority. Say It Out Loud is a new, multi-year statewide campaign in Illinois to promote good mental health for everyone, reduce the barriers that prevent too many people from seeking or offering help and support, and build a stronger base of support and network of services for people with mental health challenges.

Research has shown that society's reluctance to talk openly about mental health is so strong that it prevents individuals from seeking the information and support needed to promote good mental health, and even prevents people from asking for help when they need it. As a result the Say It Out Loud campaign was established to reframe mental health as a key component of one's overall health and well-being by raising the subject in a nonthreatening way that is both empowering and informative. Research shows the best way to reduce the discrimination linked with mental illness is through interaction, where people can engage with one another in a truly meaningful way and share their experiences and knowledge. The Say It Out Loud campaign's network of campaign partners spreads the campaign's messages throughout the state of Illinois. Children's Home + Aid's Healthy Families Illinois program is proud to be the campaign's community partner in DeKalb County.

Children's Home + Aid provides numerous programs throughout northern Illinois, including the DeKalb County Healthy Families Illinois program, which is the primary recipient of the grant. The Healthy Families Illinois Program provides intensive home visiting services to first-time parents to prevent child abuse and neglect. This is accomplished by enhancing the quality of parent-child relationships, increasing access to community resources, supporting mental health and improving health through immunizations and well-child visits. Cumulatively these efforts strengthen families and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Margo Sutorius, Healthy Families Illinois Program Supervisor, stated, "We are excited to partner with the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority to implement the Say It Out Loud mental health campaign in DeKalb County. Mental health education, prevention, and intervention are crucial to the well-being of our community. It is imperative that the public invest in mental health and reduce barriers to obtaining these services, as we will all benefit from this."

All of society is affected when a colleague, loved one, neighbor or friend lives with a mental health challenge. Nationally, over 20 percent of the population lives with a mental health problem. Data obtained from U.S. Census and the U.S. Center for Mental Health Services suggest that, at any one time, more than 700,000 Illinois adults are coping with a diagnosable mental illness. And while 70-90 percent of mental health diagnoses are treatable, data shows that fewer than half of the people who experience these mental health challenges actually seek treatment.

If you suspect someone you know has a mental illness, let the person know you care and encourage them to seek help through a local mental health agency. Please contact Children's Home + Aid and

-more-

the Healthy Families Illinois program at 815.899.0137 for assistance in talking with someone who may be struggling with mental illness or for more information about the Say It Out Loud campaign.

Children's Home + Aid is a leading child and family service agency in Illinois. Each year, it protects, educates and counsels more than 40,000 children, youth, and families to improve their lives. Since 1883, Children's Home & Aid has been a compassionate advocate helping to shape public policy in child welfare, early childhood and juvenile justice. Children's Home + Aid is recognized for establishing best practices and achieving outstanding results through its programs and services with a focus on child abuse prevention, healthy child development and strengthening families.

Headquartered in Rockford, the Northern Region of Children's Home + Aid is devoted to serving the area's most challenged communities. The Northern Region of Children's Home + Aid provides services in many of the counties in Northern Illinois, including Winnebago, Boone and DeKalb. In DeKalb County, the agency operates the Healthy Families Illinois Program, a research based home visiting program that helps new and expectant parents strengthen their families' functioning and reduce their risk for child abuse and/or neglect. Children's Home + Aid's comprehensive, quality programs help children and families overcome the obstacles of poverty, abuse, and neglect to achieve self-sufficiency.

###