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• **Solari Hospice Care**
• **NEWS RELEASE**
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One Last Magical Christmas

Solari Hospice Care Employees Play “Santa” to Families in Need

Las Vegas, Nev. – Dec. 16, 2011 – In tough economic times such as these, many families are struggling to buy gifts for their loved ones. But, when you are a patient with hospice – and you know that this could be your *very last* Christmas – not being able to provide presents for family members becomes an even tougher pill to swallow.

Often, by the time that people are placed on hospice, they can no longer work. Caregivers must also devote a lot of time to the needs of patients, which can impact their earning potential. So, already tight finances can become stretched even further.

That’s why the employees of Solari Hospice Care band together every year, pooling money from their hard-earned paychecks to provide gifts for needy families. This year – in a generosity of money, energy and spirit – an estimated six carloads full of presents will be donated to three different families.

“Every year, we identify families who could use some extra help and ask them for a wish list,” explains Kasie Hamilton, LMSW, counseling and social work supervisor, Solari Hospice Care, who has been coordinating the Santa program for the past six years with the help of her Social Work team members. She notes that the families’ responses to fulfilling these wishes have been overwhelming.

“The families are often overcome with emotion – tearful and incredibly grateful,” says Hamilton. “They know our job is to provide comfort for their physical needs. But this shows we are willing to go above and beyond, recognizing their tangible needs as well. It’s an amazing experience to see someone nearing the end of life be able to bring their loved ones together and share such a happy, close time. It’s an incredible

feeling to know you've put a Christmas tree in someone's home who wouldn't otherwise have one, and then put presents for everyone under that tree."

"I am so proud of our employees," says Candis Armour, RN, executive director, Solari Hospice Care. "The Santa program is not a company-sponsored program, but completely employee driven and totally voluntary. Employees came up with the idea of helping needy families in the community 10 years ago, and then realized that we have needy families under our own care, so they wanted to help them. Our employees truly give from the goodness of their hearts and do all of the shopping, coordination, donations and delivery. This is from their own money and on their own time. Every year, it seems the employees do more and more. Last year, the employees helped two families, but enthusiasm was so great that this year the employees decided to help three!"

Gifts are being delivered to the families by the Solari Hospice Care social workers on Thursday, Dec. 22, and Friday, Dec. 23. For more information, please contact Kasie Hamilton at 702-870-0000, x147 or Kasie.Hamilton@solarihospice.net.

Special Note: This is not a community appeal for additional donations.

Families who are being helped by the Solari Hospice Care employees this year are:

The Lozano Family

Edelmira Lozano, age 44, has gastric cancer with metastasis. She recently had to quit her job at The Venetian after five years because she is no longer physically able to work. She lives with her husband, Jose, in a two-bedroom apartment in the northwest area of Las Vegas. Jose is a carpenter for a local contractor and works as much as he can to support his family, but with the slowdown in the economy he hasn't been getting as many hours as he'd like. He also juggles his work with taking care of Edelmira and their two sons, 17-year-old Ricardo and 24-year-old Guiller Mo, who recently went through a divorce and has moved back in with his parents. Guiller Mo is one of the primary caregivers for his mother and brother. In addition, Guiller Mo has three children – seven-year-old Heavenly, six-year-old Angel and 11-month-old Destiny – who spend a lot of time with him at the apartment, putting a further strain on resources. Although Guiller Mo is employed at Harrah's Casino, he recently had his hours cut back and is now only

working only part time. The family primarily wishes for clothes and shoes, toys for the children, and gift cards.

“This is such a terrific family and they have told me they would be appreciative of anything anyone can give for gifts,” says Monica Coulter, LSW, social worker, Solari Hospice Care. “Guiller Mo mentioned that he was sad because he wasn't going to be able to get his children anything for Christmas this year. We are so glad to be able to help.”

The Contreras Family

Alejandro Contreras, age 43, continues to wage a gallant battle against liver disease. He lives with his 39-year-old wife, Angelica, and their three daughters – Carolina, age 21; Alejandra, age 18, a high school senior; and Becky, age 8. In addition, Carolina has a three-month-old daughter, Layla. The family has struggled for some time with finances. Carolina has recently gone back to work part time. However, Angelica was laid off in 2008 and was receiving unemployment benefits until earlier this year when the benefits maxed out. She tried to work part time, but found she couldn't due to her husband's health needs. She also says she would do nothing but worry while working. The family has not been able to pay their December rent and is hoping that the patient will receive a retroactive Social Security payment to keep them going. In the meantime, they are attempting to seek help from extended family in Mexico to cover the rent. They have already had to sell their van to make ends meet. Among the items on this family's wish list are diapers, clothes, sheets, blankets and holiday cookies.

“Unfortunately, their story isn't unique among the patients we serve all year long,” says Shari Farrar, MSW, social worker, Solari Hospice Care. “Sometimes it's difficult as a health care provider to feel like you're doing enough when you leave the homes of your patients who are struggling with so much more than declining health and death and dying. Christmas provides an opportunity to really feel like you're doing that little bit more that you often feel you can't do during the year. I almost believe it's therapeutic for the social workers and all the staff members who participate by donating money or buying gifts to bring a little bit of happiness into the lives of our neediest patients and families. When I told Mrs. Contreras about their selection as a Christmas family, she said that their 8-year-old daughter had been asking about gifts for Christmas and Mrs. Contreras had told her, ‘I'm afraid there isn't going to be Christmas this year.’ It's an honor to help this wonderful family and bring Christmas in their home.”

The Powell Family

Richard Powell, age 81, moved in with his son, Nate, and daughter-in-law, Natalia, two years ago after losing his wife of nearly 40 years. He was placed on hospice services for end-stage cardiac disease. In addition to Richard's illness, the family has faced a number of challenges this year. Nate required knee surgery over the summer. Since recovering, he has been laid off from his job in security at a local casino. He recently found new employment, and has been working double shifts to catch up financially. Natalia is balancing school and an internship with parenting and family responsibilities. Richard also lives with his six grandchildren: Savion, age 9; Kyara, age 8; Nate Jr., age 5; Christian, age 4; and Soleil and Gabrielle, 17-month-old twin girls. The family needs a vacuum cleaner and would love to get a new oven or barbeque grill.

"The family is so loving to each other," says Alyssa Burwell, LMSW, social worker, Solari Hospice Care. "Though it can be stressful to have so many people in the home, Richard, Nate and Natalia do a good job of keeping up their spirits. They are always happy to see the Solari Hospice Care staff and thankful for the visits. They were worried about how they were going to manage Christmas this year because times are so tight. The fact that we are able to help with gifts really takes the stress off and lets them get into the holiday spirit that much more."

About Solari Hospice Care

Solari Hospice Care is devoted to helping people live with dignity and comfort by providing trusted and professional hospice care in the Las Vegas and Houston communities. Focused on enhancing the quality of life for patients and their loved ones, Solari's exemplary team of physicians, pharmacists, registered nurses, certified nursing aides, social workers, administrative staff and counselors are specially trained to offer the most compassionate and comforting care designed for each patient's unique needs. To learn more about Solari Hospice Care, please visit www.solarihospice.com, e-mail info@solarihospice.net or follow @SolariHospice on Twitter or Facebook.

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