

For Immediate Release

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Two Local Organizations Partner to Bring the Gift of Art to Homeless Children

KidzArt and Birthday Blessings Offer Art Birthday Parties to Shelter Children

(May 1, 2010, Charlotte, NC) - Imagine being a child whose birthday isn't recognized or celebrated with a cake, a gift or a birthday party with friends and family. For the many children living in homeless shelters, this is commonplace. Thanks to two local organizations, more homeless children will have a joyful, artistic experience on their birthdays!

Birthday Blessings, an organization that brings birthday parties to kids at homeless shelters and KidzArt, an art enrichment program for kids of all ages, have announced a partnership. KidzArt, whose offerings include art birthday parties, will donate monthly art party services to children in shelters around the Charlotte area.

"I am thrilled to have been able to use our creative supplies and services to help others in our community who are in need. Since giving back to our community is one of the core values of KidzArt, we felt this was a perfect opportunity for us," says Jill Long, executive director of KidzArt in the South Charlotte area.

Since 1993, KidzArt has been providing art training and encouraging creative thinking but also supporting their local communities. Founders Shell Herman and Chris Cruikshank have always placed a high value on being of service to the community and began doing so by donating classes to their local senior center or offering free classes at their children's schools. KidzArt has since geared its franchises to promote the company's "giving back" philosophy. "To donate art classes or art birthday parties means so much to the children and it's extremely rewarding for me," says Long. "We look forward to giving more kids the gift of art on their birthdays!"

KidzArt will continue to support its local communities in order to accomplish the company's mission of bringing the gift of art to as many people as possible. For information on the KidzArt in south Charlotte and

Waxhaw/Marvin, contact Jill Long at 704-941-0074, email jill@kidzart.com or visit www.kidzartsouthcharlotte.com.

About KidzArt

Founded in 1993, KidzArt is designed to let kids and seniors of all ages explore their inner artistic potential in a safe, structured, non-competitive environment. KidzArt was recently ranked the Top Children's Art **Franchise** in *Entrepreneur* magazine's Franchise 500 for 2006, and made their **Best of the Best list**. In addition, KidzArt was recently named among the **Fast 55** by *Franchise Times* magazine for 2006. Franchising since July 2002, KidzArt has franchised units nationwide and growing. To find out more about the KidzArt franchise in your area, contact Sue Bartman at 800-379-8302 or visit them on the Web at <http://www.kidzart.com>.

About Birthday Blessings

Birthday Blessings began in 2005 as a family service project created by Mint Hill couple Amy and John Cervantes. In 2008 the Cervantes incorporated their service venture as a registered 501c3 nonprofit, quickly expanding the organization's programs and services. To date, Birthday Blessings has celebrated more than 1,100 birthdays for local homeless children and their families. The all-volunteer nonprofit currently serves homeless families and programs across a four-county region, as well as homeless elementary and middle school students throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The organization also provides Blessing Baskets filled with care essentials and gifts to welcome and support the arrival of homeless babies.

Birthday Blessings began developing a national expansion program in 2009, with pilot affiliate chapters now getting under way in northeast Indiana; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Atlanta, Georgia. For more information visit <http://www.birthdayblessings.org>.