

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Event photos available upon request*

Community event proceeds raise support for area homeless children

Monkey Joe's-Birthday Blessings partnership event a huge success

(Charlotte, NC, August 20, 2009) -- On Friday, July 31, kids across Charlotte were "bouncing for birthdays" at all four Monkey Joe's locations to help benefit local homeless children. Monkey Joe's hosted a community-wide Family Fun event to kick off its new partnership with local non-profit Birthday Blessings, a Charlotte-based organization that brings birthday joy and support to homeless children and their families.

Hundreds of kids and parents turned out at every location in support of this special event, including neighborhood groups, play groups and moms clubs. Donated proceeds from this inaugural partnership event raised over \$880 to help support Birthday Blessings.

Monkey Joe's support for Birthday Blessings extends beyond Family Fun community events. All area locations will also open their doors, on a regular basis, as an offsite location for the non-profit's Shelter Party Program. Additional collaboration efforts include creating special business alliances that will help further support for Birthday Blessings. *"Monkey Joe's has donated tens of thousands of dollars to local charities, schools, and organizations. We are dedicated to the community, and Monkey Joe's is very proud to be partnering with Birthday Blessings,"* says co-owner Michael Torcellini.

Birthday Blessings is a 501c(3) non-profit organization founded in 2005 by Charlotte couple Amy and John Cervantes. The organization currently serves seven area homeless facilities in Mecklenburg and Union counties, as well as homeless elementary students throughout Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Birthday Blessings operates three core programs: Shelter Parties—monthly birthday celebrations at local housing facilities; Classroom Parties—birthday snack bags and treats provided anonymously for homeless elementary students; and Blessing Baskets—care essentials and gifts that welcome and support the arrival of homeless babies.

"This new partnership with Monkey Joe's is a true blessing to our organization," says Birthday Blessings volunteer executive director and co-founder Amy Cervantes. *"Not only will these community events and alliances bring awareness and much-needed funding to Birthday Blessings, but the on-site parties give area homeless children a rare opportunity to experience a simple joy that many of us likely take for granted."*

To date, Birthday Blessings has provided birthday parties for more than 700 local homeless children, celebrating with thousands of needy youth across the greater Charlotte area. The organization continues to expand locally and will begin serving York County, South Carolina this fall. In addition, Birthday Blessings recently launched a national expansion with its first affiliate chapter now operating in northeast Indiana. Several more chapters are planned for multiple cities across the country.

For more information, please visit: www.birthdayblessings.org; and www.monkeyjoes.com.

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