

The Wishmakers Raise Money for Families of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA)

February 5, 2011 – Stroudsburg, PA – A child coming into the world is a beautiful thing. But sometimes that child is taken from us too soon, due to genetic diseases such as Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). This is why The Wishmakers, a charity organization in Pennsylvania that harnesses the power of music and art to foster the spirit of giving, is choosing SMA as their next project.



In August 2010, The Wishmakers co-founder Gary Wehrkamp lost his 6-month-old niece Violet to SMA. Using his artistic gift of designing mazes, he has put together a collection of 100 mazes which he will pull from to create an activity book for children that will go on sale for \$10 starting February 18, 2010 through The Wishmakers website and also a kick-off event at Desaki Japanese Restaurant on Route 611 in Swiftwater, PA. All profits raised from the sale of the books

will be donated to the non-profit organization Families of SMA.

When you ask five-year old Gabriel Wehrkamp why he is coloring in his daddy's mazes he will reply, "I am doing it for Violet." Even he has felt the loss of his cousin and is doing all he can to help raise money for research and pre-screening for the disease.

About Spinal Muscular Atrophy

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a motor neuron disease that affects the voluntary muscles used for basic activities such as crawling, walking, head and neck control, and swallowing. It is a relatively common "rare disorder" that affects approximately 1 in 6,000 babies. Approximately 1 in 40 adults are genetic carriers of SMA and in order for a child to be affected by SMA, both parents must pass this gene on to their child. Due to this rare culmination of circumstances, many people are surprised to learn that SMA is the leading genetic killer of infants, taking approximately 13,000 children each year, many before they reach their second birthday. Even more surprising is to learn that SMA is not on the list of 37 required pre-pregnancy genetic screenings. Currently, there is no effective treatment or cure for this disease, but with private investments a breakthrough in research is achievable within the next five years.

About The Wishmakers

The WishMakers was founded in 2008 by Pennsylvania business owners, musicians, and artists, to raise money and awareness for various local and national charities by donating their time and talent. Our projects range from original music productions to art, books, and other creative collaborations.

The WishMakers' first project was to produce and record an original Christmas song, titled "Christmastime in the Poconos", a song about the joy, togetherness and spirit of giving that Christmastime brings to the Pocono Mountain area, where the founding members share family, friends and fond memories. The project was an effort to raise money for the Monroe County Children and Youth Services Christmas Fund who's goal is to provide Christmas gifts to children who have not yet found their forever family.

For more information go to www.thewishmakers.org, www.littleflowerviolet.com, or www.fsma.org