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News Release

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Ronald McDonald House Charities Awards Prevent Child Abuse America \$1.2 Million *Grant to support prenatal care in family support program*

CHICAGO, IL – June 30, 2000 – In an effort to increase prenatal care to thousands of mothers across the country, Ronald McDonald House Charities has awarded Prevent Child Abuse America a \$1.2 million, four-year grant. This grant will be used to support “Great Beginnings Start Before Birth,” a new prenatal component of Healthy Families America®. This project will improve and expand the quality of prenatal support services available to families participating in the program, including much-needed outreach to involve fathers.

Launched in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, Healthy Families America is a voluntary home visitation program aimed at strengthening bonds between parents and children, improving child health and development, and preventing child abuse and neglect.

“Working to parents before a child enters their lives offers a great opportunity for increasing their confidence and lowering the stress that often accompanies the birth of a child,” said A. Sidney Johnson III, president and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse America. “This prenatal initiative is an important step in preventing child abuse and neglect. Great beginnings really do start before birth. Supporting families during the prenatal period helps ensure that children have the best chance for a healthy start in life.”

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Each year approximately 3 million children are reported as abused and neglected according to Prevent Child Abuse America. And, three children die each day as a result of abuse or neglect. In fact, the rate of infant mortality in the U.S. remains among the highest in the industrialized world. In addition, substance abuse and domestic violence during pregnancy can be equally harmful to both the mother and the child. Substance abuse can result in premature birth, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and other poor birth outcomes, while domestic violence can lead to miscarriage and low birth weight. One of the first steps in preventing child abuse and neglect begins with providing families with the best possible information about the importance of prenatal care, positive parenting and the developmental stages of their child.

“We are very grateful for the initial and ongoing support of Ronald McDonald House Charities, which has played an integral role in the development of Healthy Families America every step of the way. Ronald McDonald House Charities is an invaluable partner and is one of the main reasons this program continues to thrive today. And this grant will help ensure the continued success of Healthy Families America.” said Johnson.

An initiative of Prevent Child Abuse America, Healthy Families America has been described by the American Academy of Pediatrics as “one of the most hopeful and promising developments that has occurred in the recent memory of those working in the field of child maltreatment.” Healthy Families America is currently available to more than 33,000 families nationwide through 417 sites in 39 states, the District of Columbia and Canada.

Ronald McDonald House Charities, a non-profit, 501(c)(3), provides comfort and care to children and families through its network of local Charities currently serving 32 countries. The Charity makes grants to not-for-profit organizations, primarily for programs that provide direct services aimed at improving the health and wellness of children, and provides support to Ronald McDonald Houses nationwide. To date, Ronald McDonald House Charities’ national body and its global network of local Charities have awarded more than \$225 million in grants to children’s

programs worldwide. For more information visit the Ronald McDonald House Charities website at www.rmhc.org.

Founded in 1972 by Donna J. Stone, Prevent Child Abuse America (formerly the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse) is the leading organization working at the national, state and local levels to prevent child abuse in all its forms. Headquartered in Chicago, Prevent Child Abuse America has chapters in nearly 40 states and is supported by private and corporate donors. The organization is widely known for its public awareness, education, prevention programs, advocacy and research.

More information about child abuse prevention and Healthy Families America is available by calling Prevent Child Abuse America at 1-800-CHILDREN or by accessing www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org.

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