



**Subject: St Jude's Ranch Press Announcement – Keeping Families Together for the Holidays**

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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## Keeping Families Together for the Holidays

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**One of the tragic consequences of tough economic times is an increase in family breakdowns. That means more abandoned, neglected and abused children whose parents are drug addicts, criminals, prostitutes, mentally ill, or just destitute. Many thousands more children are abused, or neglected to the point that the local child protective services agency steps in and puts them in foster care or, if they're in Nevada, sends them to St. Jude's Ranch for Children.**

St. Jude's Ranch provides therapeutic healing and nurturing to these children that society has abandoned and unlike almost every other child care organization has the ability to keep siblings together. For example, most foster homes do not. "We believe it's the right thing to do, the family thing to do" says Christine J. Spadafor, CEO of St. Jude's Ranch. "When these children come to us, often the only things they have left are brothers and sisters. Keeping them together gives them a place to start from, something to build on after all the trauma they have experienced together in their short lives."

"We are bringing more children into our safe haven, including two families of 7 kids," says Spadafor. "We always take in more children when times are tough, like now, because families can fall apart under economic pressure."

The ability to keep large sibling groups together sets St. Jude's Ranch apart - it is the only therapeutic children's program in the area that can keep two groups of seven brothers and sisters together as a family. Before living at the Ranch, some of them lived in different homes, or were constantly on the move. "We gave them their own home on the Nevada campus, the first one they have ever had together," says Spadafor.

St. Jude's Ranch took their first group of seven siblings in early in 2008 and just opened its doors to the second sibling group last week, just in time for the holidays. "We are so proud to offer a safe and loving environment for these children. We pride

ourselves on keeping families together and that is what we will do for these amazing kids," says Spadafor.

Fundraising is more difficult when the economy is bad. These tough economic conditions mean additional pressure on the organization at a time when it is taking in more children.

"We're finding it more challenging to raise money this year," says Spadafor, "Giving is down just when we need it most."



As well as taking care of the every-day expenses, larger donors are also vital to St. Jude's Ranch as they aim to expand their services to other children in need. "We're desperate to open our facility for pregnant and parenting teens; we are so close too. We plan to open the doors in early 2009 and we already have heard of enough girls in need of placement to fill the facility," says Spadafor. "All we are waiting on now is the finishing touches, the furniture and baby items needed for the building. We are looking to the community to help us provide for these girls in need and help us keep families together through this new program."

Keeping families together is the way St. Jude's Ranch for Children operates. From sibling groups of seven to young mothers and their babies, the most important thing at the end of the day is that they are together. "Often our children come to us with only the clothes on their back and the brothers and sisters at their side. We have to preserve that for them," says Spadafor.

For more information about St. Jude's Ranch for Children, or to make a donation, visit [www.stjudesranch.org](http://www.stjudesranch.org).

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