

**For Immediate Release**

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**Family Pulls Together Amidst Tragedy to Raise Funds for SIDS Research**  
*Children's Hospital Receives \$50,000 for Research to Help Save Babies' Lives*

Boston, MA— March, 2009- *For Melissa and Jason Cherella of CA, the tragic death of their daughter Marley Jaye to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) meant that the course of their lives would be forever changed. But, amidst their grief, they made a commitment to Marley Jaye to do everything in their power to help ensure that no family endures the sudden, unexpected death of a precious child.*

The Cherella's established a memorial fund at First Candle, the nation's leading organization dedicated to infant health and survival, and launched a campaign to raise funds in Marley's memory. This week, they donated more than \$100,000, including \$50,000 to Children's Hospital Boston, to support ongoing research projects to help develop lifesaving strategies to prevent the more than 4,500 sudden, unexpected infant deaths (SUID) occurring each year in the United States.

The Cherella's and their family fundraised from Boston to Los Angeles, with family, friends, co-workers and community groups all playing a role in its success.

"Our entire family is deeply grateful to all of the volunteers and generous donors who played a role in making this happen," said Mike Mountain of Arlington, Melissa Cherella's brother, who along with his parents arranged fundraising events in Boston. "It is our sincere hope that this contribution in the memory of our darling niece Marley will make a lasting impact in the fight against SIDS."

The donation will be split between two leading researchers: Dr. Hannah Kinney of Children's Hospital Boston, the primary pediatric teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, and Dr. Henry Krous of Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego.

Dr. Kinney's ongoing research of the brainstems of SIDS victims has provided the strongest evidence yet that SIDS is not the "mystery" disease we once thought, but has a concrete biological basis. Dr. Krous is the first in the field to create a central repository for the clinical, epidemiological and pathological data collected on babies and children who die without warning.

According to Dr. Kinney, Dr. Krous' project is critical to not only her research, but to research projects worldwide, as they work to find causes and identify preventive strategies to save as many lives as possible.

Despite dramatic reductions in SIDS rates during the past decade, SIDS remains the leading cause of death for infants one month to one year of age. Statistics also show that the United States infant mortality rates recently dropped to 29<sup>th</sup> among developed nations. This means that 28 developed nations do a better job of keeping their babies healthy and safe during the first year of life than the United States, one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

For more information on the event please visit [www.marleycherellafund.org](http://www.marleycherellafund.org). For more information about Dr. Kinney's work, please visit [www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org).

*First Candle is a national, nonprofit health organization dedicated to promoting safe pregnancies and the survival of babies through the first years of life. With programs of research, education and advocacy we are working toward a future where all babies are provided the best possible chance to reach not only their first birthday, but many happy birthdays beyond. Until we reach this goal, we remain committed to providing compassionate grief support to all those affected by the death of a baby. For more information, to make a donation or to access local support services, please call 1.800.221.7437 or visit [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org).*

*Children's Hospital Boston, an internationally renowned center for medical research and treatment, is one of the only pediatric hospitals nationwide that focuses on pairing world-class research with clinical resources to develop novel therapies to treat and cure children. Many of the hospital's scientific advancements have far-reaching implications for treating adults, too – they target diseases including prostate and breast cancer, macular degeneration, and Alzheimer's. For more information, visit [www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org).*

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