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Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno Meets Families and Children Who Benefit from Catastrophic Fund

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Trenton, NJ – Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today joined with families who received grants from the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) to encourage other deserving families to access the fund's resources.

CICRF grants provide financial assistance to families with costly medical bills associated with their child's illness that are not covered by health insurance. Nearly 170 families received more than \$3.4 million in grants for the first half of the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget.

"In this Season of Service, we wanted to educate families about this incredible gift and that it's available when all other options have been exhausted," said Lt. Governor Guadagno while meeting with the families in the Governor's outer office.

CICRF was established in 1988 and has distributed more than \$132 million in grants to 5,484 families. In Fiscal Year 2011, nearly \$5.5 million was distributed to deserving families.

Families with children who have uncovered medical expenses apply for grants to reimburse specific, documented, medically-related costs. Applications are investigated, authenticated and reviewed by the Fund's Commission for grant disbursement.

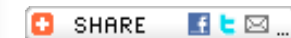
"These families' stories are as heart wrenching as they are inspirational," said Jennifer Velez, Department of Human Services Commissioner. "With help from the Fund, these parents can focus on caring for their children, instead of worrying about how they'll afford the high costs of necessary medical treatment and equipment."

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Under the CICRF's guidelines, a catastrophic illness is any sickness or condition, acute or chronic, for which expenses are incurred that are not fully covered by insurance, state or federal programs, or other sources. Families are eligible if they have lived in New Jersey for at least three months prior to the date of application, if the child was 21 years or younger when the expenses were incurred, and if expenses exceed 10% of the family's income up to \$100,000 or 15% of any income over \$100,000.

"We appreciate the help we received through the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund," said Bruce Notte, whose family received a grant for the purchase of a modified vehicle for their son Anthony. "The grant we received helped Anthony become more mobile and involved in our community."

"I've always worked to give my daughter a 'normal' life, despite her disabilities," said Christina Cerza, whose family received a grant through the fund for home modifications to accommodate her daughter Carly's wheelchair. "The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund has given her a new level of independence, a greater quality of life."

For more information about the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, visit njcatastrophicfund.org or call 1-800-335-FUND (3863). Initial applications can be submitted electronically.

CICRF is a dedicated, revolving, non-lapsing trust fund collected from an annual contribution of \$1.50 per employee for all employers operating under the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Law.

Also on hand for the event was Tom Bracken, chief executive officer of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, and Melanie Willoughby, senior vice president of New Jersey Business & Industry Association.

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