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**BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER'S CHILD LIFE PROGRAM  
RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM  
THE STARLIGHT STARBRIGHT CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION**

New York (April 3, 2008) – The Child Life Program at Beth Israel Medical Center is being provided support for a child life intern by The Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation NY\*NJ\*CT as part of Starlight's Pediatric Hospital Support Program. The intern will benefit the Child Life Program and seriously ill children at the hospital. This year Starlight's Pediatric Hospital Support Program has supported 61 tri-state area hospitals with an estimated value of programs totaling more than \$1.7 million.

“Starlight's mission is to help seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education, and family activities,” stated Elaine Siver, Executive Director of Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation of NY\*NJ\*CT. “This program is designed to aid children's services in hospitals like Beth Israel. We are confident it will help restore some of the happiness that a serious illness takes away and make a child's hospital experience more pleasant and when possible, more fun.”

Through Starlight's generous support, Beth Israel will be able to hire a college student who is studying child life to intern at the hospital. The intern will learn the clinical application of their school study by working with children and their families to reduce stress and anxiety during their hospital stay. He/she will use appropriate play and education materials to help parents and children prepare for surgery. Techniques include medical play, specifically designed DVDs for educating patients and their families, diversionary activities and breathing techniques. Child life specialists also engage in traditional games like board games, Nintendo and small, manipulative toys for toddlers in the pediatric playroom to help each child get comfortable in the hospital environment.

Over the past 12 years, Starlight's pediatric hospital support program has supported 84 hospitals in the tri-state area with an estimated project value of more than \$7.6 million. The programs supported by Starlight have brightened the lives of more than one million

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hospitalized children. In general, the program supports projects that will continue to have an impact on children beyond the initial year of implementation and strives to make a child's hospital experience more pleasant.

“When in the hospital, children often feel confused, overwhelmed and scared,” says Honey Shields, C.C.L.S, and Director of the Child Life Program at Beth Israel Medical Center. “Our child life specialists are dedicated to helping make our pediatric patients and their families as comfortable as possible. We are thrilled that the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation recognizes how important this mission is and has committed to providing real training for a student who wants to learn child life. In turn, they are providing the hospital with another resource who can help acclimate our youngest patients to an unfamiliar environment.”

In addition to providing a child life intern from the Pediatric Hospital Support Program, Starlight is also placing a brand new Nintendo Wii Fun Center in the playroom at Beth Israel Medical Center. Fun Centers are interactive entertainment units that include a Sharp Aquos flat-panel screen, a DVD player and the newly anticipated Nintendo Wii System. These portable units can roll anywhere in the hospital, including right up to a child's bedside, so even children who can't move can still play. Whether nervously awaiting surgery, or feeling lonely in their hospital room, Fun Centers help children cope with their feelings of fear, loneliness and anxiety. New studies have shown that the Nintendo Wii System requires movement similar to traditional therapy exercises and at the same time are mentally stimulating to patients. Starlight also provides a clown once a week called Loonie Louie and helped the child life program get “brave bears” for their surgical patients under 2 years old, which they can take home upon discharge.

#### **About Beth Israel Medical Center**

Beth Israel Medical Center is a 1,106-bed, full-service tertiary teaching hospital that was founded on Manhattan's Lower East Side before the turn of the 20th century. Beth Israel originally was dedicated to serving a vulnerable population in that community. Now a century later, the Medical Center serves individuals and families from every walk of life throughout New York City and beyond.

#### **About the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation**

The Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation makes a world of difference for seriously ill children and their families. Since 1985, the NY\*NJ\*CT chapter has been offering hope and a brighter future for seriously ill children. The goal of the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation is to help these children experience the simple joys of being a child. Each year, Starlight serves over 275,000 critically, chronically, and terminally ill children throughout New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Some of Starlight's most unique programs include Great Escapes, special outings for children and their families, STARBRIGHT World, a private online community for teens who are living with chronic diseases to connect, Hospital Happenings, including themed parties, toys, and visits from entertainers. For more information on the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation of NY\*NJ\*CT, please log on to [www.starlight-newyork.org](http://www.starlight-newyork.org).

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