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For Immediate Release

Baby and Mother Visit GSU Physical Therapy Class

University Park, Illinois, March 7, 2007 -What do Oprah Winfrey, a professor from Governors State University, a psychologist from Chicago, and the kindness of many have in common? They are all helping Joshua, a 13-month old baby from Ireland.

Joshua was born with arthrogryposis, a rare congenital malformation of the joints. His legs were amputated above the knee when he was a month old and his remaining joints failed to develop. The cognitively normal baby faces an uncertain future. Medical understanding for his condition in Ireland is minimal and treatment is limited.

"I was basically told to take him home and bring him back when he was seven years old for a wheelchair," explained Gillian Duffy-Huff, Joshua's mother. Duffy-Huff and Joshua were at Governors State University last month to discuss her son's condition and treatment with students studying physical therapy.

Dr. Russell Carter, Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at GSU, arranged for the visit. "I wanted our students to understand what happens when the healthcare system does not respond to the needs of the patient. This was an opportunity for them to see a rare deformity and to meet an amazing parent."

"I am desperate to find help for Joshua. I know there has to be more in life for him," said Duffy-Huff

Help for Joshua came because his mother is a strong and determined advocate, explained Dr. Carter. "The parent advocate makes all the difference, even in Ireland which does not offer the treatment a child like Joshua needs."

Duffy-Huff knew the treatment was available in the United States because her other child, who is autistic, is currently receiving treatment from Dr. Carter and Dr. Margaret P. Creedon, an autism specialist and Fellow at the Academy of Clinical Psychology in Chicago. When they visited the family in Ireland to treat Joshua's brother, they offered their services to Joshua for free.

"Treatment delays in this case can cause insurmountable setbacks. Joshua's muscles must be worked and stretched constantly," explained Dr. Carter. "Gillian is wonderful. She did everything we suggested and found out more on her own, but specialized treatments and a medical treatment plan are still needed. Joshua can't get them in Ireland. Their healthcare system will not provide them."

This is where Oprah Winfrey enters the picture. On her show last October, Winfrey gave each audience member \$1000, instructing them to do something good for someone else. Valerie Creedon of Chicago, daughter of Dr. Creedon, and her friend were in the audience. They pooled their money to create a foundation to help Joshua. Through a series of surprising coincidences and remarkable acts of generosity, they arranged free airline transportation through American Airlines and a visit to a Detroit Orthotist, Dr. Greg Greenway. Dr. Greenway treated Joshua pro bono and crafted his first prosthetic extension sockets, or pylons.

"Joshua was the youngest person to be fitted with these. They will shape the residual limbs so when Joshua gets actual prosthetic legs the residual leg will fit snugly into the prosthesis," said Dr. Carter.

In addition to the beginning prosthesis, Joshua was recently fitted with splints to help stretch his wrist and hand muscles, enabling him to gain greater use of his hands and fingers in the future.

According to Dr. Carter, if Joshua had been born in the United States, these treatments would have begun immediately. While the healthcare community in Ireland is now trying to respond to Joshua's needs, says Duffy-Huff, "They don't really know how to treat him or what to do."

To help further Joshua's treatment, Shriners Hospital has agreed to evaluate Joshua and create a plan of care. Drs. Carter and Creedon in Chicago, as well as Dr. Greenway in Detroit, have agreed to continue to provide their services. The foundation developed to assist Joshua is raising funds to bring him to the United States periodically for the treatments he so desperately needs.

The Governors State University students who met Joshua and his mother were moved to help. "If I can in some way improve his life," says Jayanthi Srinidhar of Glendale Heights, "then I will improve mine."

Shecana Woomer of New Lenox believed she benefited from meeting Joshua. "Reality

makes the most impact. Understanding the real life issues faced by this family will help me develop professionally. Not everything is by the book.”

For more information about how to help Joshua, call (773) 350-0441 or visit www.payitforwardforhope.org.

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