



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MERCYHEALTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES CEREMONY TO INSPIRE GRIEVING FAMILIES

ROCKFORD, Illinois—The Mercyhealth Development Foundation, along with other community organizations, invites area families to attend the **Angel Statue of Hope Candlelight Vigil and Remembrance Ceremony** on **Friday, December 6, at 6 pm**, at the Angel Statue of Hope located in Waterside Park at the corner of East State and Water Streets in downtown Rockford.

This year marks the seventeenth anniversary of the ceremony, held to help heal and comfort those who have lost a child. The program features inspirational music sung by Rockford native Jodi Beach, testimonials, and a time for reflection. Families are encouraged to bring a single white flower to place at the base of the statue.

The beautiful bronze Angel Statue is dedicated to the memory of children who have died at any age – during pregnancy, as infants or as older children. Since its inception, in May 2003, the Angel Statue of Hope has provided a comforting place for families to mourn and heal beneath the angel's outstretched wings. More than 100 communities have installed similar angel statues, inspired by the book "A Christmas Box Angel" by Richard Paul Evans. Candlelight ceremonies are held at each of the statues annually on December 6.

The local ceremony is organized and sponsored by representatives from the Mercyhealth Development Foundation, The Haven Network, Fitzgerald Funeral Home & Crematory, Rockford Park District, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, SwedishAmerican-a Division of UW Health and event founder Christine Saporiti-Tillou. For more information, contact the Mercyhealth Pediatric Child Life Office at (815) 971-5309.

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Note to Media: Please help us promote this event in advance so that families who have experienced loss are aware of it and can attend; advance interviews can be arranged.

At the event, we ask photographers and news crews to please respect the privacy of grieving family members by shooting only from a distance or from behind the attendees to minimize any intrusion. Interviews can be arranged either before or after the ceremony.