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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **PREMIER CHILDREN'S CHARITY SETS FUNDRAISING RECORD AT EIGHTH ANNUAL GALA**

### **Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation-MidAtlantic hosts Eighth Annual Taste of the Stars**

**Washington, DC, December 5, 2007** - Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation-MidAtlantic raised a record breaking \$625,000 during the *Eighth Annual Taste of the Stars Gala*, it announced today. The gala was hosted at the five-star hotel The Four Seasons on Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Proceeds from the events will help brighten the lives of local children who are seriously ill.

The gala enchanted over 400 guests with a Garden of Earthly Delights. Guests were transported to a magical garden full of life, love and luxurious items. This year's event and theme were the vision of Co-Chairs Dr. Susan Ascher and Mrs. Dina Mackney.

The luxurious items showcased during the silent auction included jewelry pieces from J. Brown Jewelers, Tiffany & Co., and Dina Mackney Designs; sports paraphernalia to make any fan go wild including a hockey stick signed by the entire 2007-2008 Washington Capitals team; trips to exciting locations such as spas in California, golfing in Georgia, and fishing in Utah; and more as nine categories with over 214 items were on display. The Master of Ceremonies was author and actress Ali Wentworth. Wentworth kept the crowd laughing and encouraged bidding in support of a worthy cause.

Guests created a bidding fury around the live auction items. Paddles flew in the air for travel packages, an Allman Brothers exclusive package, a yellow Labrador Retriever puppy, jewelry, watches and wine lots. During the live auction excitement, the room fell silent when seven-year-old Lisa Linares took the stage. The youngster spoke about life with a cancerous brain tumor and the impact Starlight MidAtlantic events and programs have on her days in the hospital.

"Besides my cancer I have the opportunity to forget the pain I have been through," Lisa Linares, a Starlight child, shared at the gala. "Its very important to let you know how many kids like me are suffering and missing part of their lives, but thanks to Starlight MidAtlantic these kids are recovering part of being a kid."

Lisa's personal story gave a face to Starlight's work. After she spoke, attendees were eager to bid on Fun Centers, hospital safe mobile entertainment units, which are being delivered directly to local hospitals. This year funds for over 35 Fun Centers were raised.

"Taste of the Stars gala is a wonderful event and demonstrates an incredible outpouring of support for Starlight MidAtlantic. Hearing Lisa's talk was heart wrenching and really reminded everyone of the true reason for the gala," said Cara Martin, Executive Director, Starlight MidAtlantic. "It was amazing to see guests bidding on items in order to support our mission of helping seriously ill children and their families during their difficult time. The tremendous generosity was truly inspiring."

After enjoying the gourmet dinner and fine wines, guests danced the night away to the Pat Patrick Band. Tired feet took a break in the heated outdoor Cigar Lounge. The entire event was made

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possible by the generous donations of local business, corporate sponsorships and individual gifts. Proceeds from this year's gala will finance a multitude of Starlight MidAtlantic programs including: Fun Centers, Starlight Sites, Hospital Happenings, PC Pals and Great Escapes for children in over 100 hospitals across the MidAtlantic region. Programs such as these reach over 17,199 local children a year.

**About Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation–MidAtlantic:**

Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation – MidAtlantic helps seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities. The foundation softens the hard edges of what a family experiences when a child has a serious illness, from the time of diagnosis all the way through, in the hospital and at home. Starlight MidAtlantic focuses on the children of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, DC and West Virginia. For more information please visit [www.starlight-midatlantic.org](http://www.starlight-midatlantic.org).

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