



www.starlight-washington.org

CONTACT:

Erin Behen, MS

Program Services Director

206-679-7081 (cell)

erin@starlight-washington.org

MEDIA ALERT

Seriously ill teens get chance to enjoy traditional Valentine's Dance without being stared at

WHAT: **Starlight Children's Foundation "Family Valentine's Day Weekend"**

WHEN: **Feb. 11, 2011** 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

WHERE: **Great Wolf Lodge**, 20500 Old Highway 99, SW, Grand Mound, WA 98531

WHO: **72 seriously ill teens**, with chronic or life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, cystic fibrosis, kidney and heart disease, diabetes, asthma, sickle-cell disease and severe burns.

WHY: Many of the teens served by Starlight Children's Foundation have never been able to attend school dances because they're immuno-suppressed or simply don't have the stamina after rounds of treatments. This pre-Valentine's Dance (and the following free day at the Lodge's water park) gives them a chance to enjoy themselves in a safe environment, where they can enjoy normal social events that most teens take for granted. The weekend is an opportunity to get away from their medical concerns with a special evening where they won't be stared at, and can socialize with other teens who know what they're going through.

MORE: Great Wolf Lodge is donating the ballroom and catering for the event, which will be held in the resort's conference center, and also is providing discounted weekend stays for Starlight families. The DJ is providing his services for free. The ballroom will be decorated with colorful Valentine décor to supply a comforting, fun environment, and activities will also be provided during the dance. Starlight hopes to find retailers who will provide free dresses, hair styling and makeup.

About Starlight Children's Foundation

When a child or teenager has a serious medical condition, everyone in the family is affected. For more than 25 years, Starlight Children's Foundation has been dedicated to helping seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities. Starlight's programs have been proven to distract children from their pain, help them better understand and manage their illnesses, and connect families facing similar challenges so that no one feels alone. Through a network of chapters and offices, Starlight provides ongoing support to children, parents and siblings in all U.S. states and Canadian provinces with an array of outpatient, hospital-based and Web offerings. Programs are also delivered internationally through affiliates in Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Starlight's Washington State chapter (www.starlight-washington.org) served more than 46,000 children and family members at 564 inpatient and community events statewide in its last fiscal year. The chapter has been awarded a Four-Star rating by Charity Navigator, the nation's premier independent charity evaluator.

5001 150th Avenue NE, Redmond WA 98052

(425) 861-7827

(866) 236-6379