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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Starbright World*®, Starlight's online community for sick teens and teen siblings, gets a makeover**

Site made possible by signature sponsor Vivendi's generous contribution

Los Angeles, Calif., Dec. 14, 2009 – Having a serious medical condition makes it hard for teens to cope with already-difficult realities of being a teenager. Supporting a sibling with an illness can be daunting as well. That is why Starlight Children's Foundation created *Starbright World*, an online social network for sick teens and teen siblings of sick kids. With help from Vivendi, Starlight's next generation of *Starbright World* leverages the latest social networking technology, satisfying the ever-changing expectations of today's teens.

"We created *Starbright World* more than a decade ago to improve the lives of teenagers facing chronic or life-threatening illnesses by promoting communication, connection and self-expression," said Paula Van Ness, CEO, Starlight. "Technology has advanced rapidly since then, so we were thrilled when Vivendi generously agreed to fund the site's rebuild. Without their support, the site was becoming obsolete, but now measures up to other popular social networks."

Because seriously ill teens are in-and-out of the hospital or stuck at home, or because people often cannot relate or are fearful once a friend has been diagnosed, most of these teens feel alone. On *Starbright World*, they, and siblings ages 13 to 20, connect with each other via chat; express themselves through stories, photos, videos, and personal profiles; and have fun with contests and games. To keep the site safe, parental consent is required for membership, and the chat rooms are monitored at all times by trained, paid Starlight staff.

A model program when it debuted in 1996, *Starbright World* has helped thousands of teens build on friendships, create new ones, and cope with illness. "Research studies have demonstrated the very real benefits of *Starbright World*, which include a reduction in pain, anxiety, loneliness and withdrawn behavior, and an increased willingness to return for medical treatment," said Joseph Bush, Ph.D., associate dean for research, Fielding Graduate University's School of Psychology.

"We are delighted with the new *Starbright World* and believe in the positive impact of its mission. Through its Create Joy Fund, Vivendi is committed to bringing joy and opportunities to young people in need, and we are honored to partner with Starlight," said Flavie Lemarchand-Wood, Vivendi's director of communications in North America.

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Popular chat series will continue on the site, such as *The Vent*, a bi-monthly chat in which teens are able to be completely candid and get reliable, honest feedback from a mental health expert. Special chat events will also occur in the following weeks, with a series of *People with Really Cool Jobs* chats and chats with celebrity guests that are set to take place with: Scott Akasaki, managing secretary of the Los Angeles Dodgers; actor Allen Alvarado; actor Tyler Mane and former WCW wrestler "Big Sky"; Jennifer O'Neal, executive producer at game development studio Vicarious Visions; American's Miss Teen Brittany Sullivan, recording artists Savvy & Mandy, and others. For a full list of special guests and their bios, send an email to donna.dedario@starlight.org.

Visit www.starbrightworld.org to learn more about *Starbright World* and how to register.

When a child or teenager has a serious medical condition, everyone in the family is affected. For 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. To learn more visit www.starlight.org.

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