



## **200 Bright Spaces Give Homeless Children Safe Places to Play and Learn**

*More than 7,000 Families in U.S. and Europe Find Comfort in  
Bright Spaces® for the Holidays*

**[WATERTOWN, Ma., December 22, 2008]** – This holiday season, more than 7,000 families facing hard times will find comfort and joy in Bright Spaces located in homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, medical clinics, food pantries, and other social service organizations in 35 U.S. states and three countries in Europe. Bright Spaces are designed by the nonprofit Bright Horizons Foundation for Children and provide families living in shelters or facing other difficult situations with a warm, safe area where children can play and learn. With more families facing homelessness due to increased unemployment and costs of living, the need for Bright Spaces is critical.

“Raising the bar for the quality of early education for all young children is core to the **Bright Horizons®** mission. Through the Bright Spaces program, thousands of children who may not have access to books, appropriate toys, or other materials that are essential for healthy growth and development can now play and learn in a safe environment created just for them. In the Bright Spaces children are able to begin a successful journey of learning, paving the way to success in life,” said Bright Horizons CEO and Member of the Board of the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, Dave Lissy.

### **Bright Spaces Enable At-Risk Children to Enjoy Childhood**

Studies have shown that children of all ages thrive when they have a safe place to explore the world around them, filled with books, toys, and activities that provide an opportunity to discover the magic of childhood. Children experiencing the stress of homelessness and other difficult situations have an even more critical need for access to these kinds of child-friendly spaces in order to develop social, cognitive, gross motor, and language skills, all of which are essential to their healthy development.

The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, the philanthropic organization of **Bright Horizons Family Solutions®**, established the Bright Spaces program in 1999. Bright Horizons partners with its clients to open Bright Spaces, rooms transformed by volunteers into safe and inviting areas where children at risk can simply play and enjoy being a child. Warm furnishings and cozy nooks give children comfortable places to explore, and shelves overflow with award-winning children’s books, educational toys, art

supplies, music and games. More than 1,700 volunteers, many of them Bright Horizons teachers, have been involved in creating the 200 Bright Spaces.

Nearly 20 Bright Spaces have opened this quarter, in time for children in need to experience the magic of the holiday season. Bright Horizons clients that have recently opened Bright Spaces include Discovery Communications, Johns Hopkins Children's Center, Johnson & Johnson, SEI, and Wachovia.

### **200<sup>th</sup> Bright Space Opens in Maryland**

Last week, members of the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children were joined by employees of Discovery Communications to celebrate the opening of the 200<sup>th</sup> **Bright Space**<sup>®</sup> at the Families Foremost Center of the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Montgomery County in Silver Spring, Maryland.

“At Discovery Communications we are committed to helping people explore their world and satisfy their curiosity. The Bright Space at the Families Foremost Center enables children who are facing some of life's greatest hardships to have access to educational materials in a comfortable environment so they can learn and thrive,” said Discovery Communications Senior Executive Vice President, Human Resources, Adria Alpert Romm.

“We are very grateful to the Bright Horizons Foundation and Discovery Communications for the true gift of a Bright Space that the children will cherish this holiday season and beyond. In the Bright Space, the children's faces light up with joy as they play with toys, dance to music, and discover books about the world. The Bright Space is where the children can relax and be themselves, putting aside for a while the stresses of their lives,” said MHA's Executive Director, Sharon E. Friedman, LCSW-C.

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### **About Bright Horizons<sup>®</sup> and the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children**

**Bright Horizons Family Solutions**<sup>®</sup> is the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education and work/life solutions. The company operates more than 650 child care and early education centers across the United States, Europe and Canada. The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children was founded to help forward the vision of Bright Horizons Family Solutions to make a difference in the lives of children and families. **Bright Spaces**<sup>®</sup> is a program of the Foundation, creating dedicated play areas in homeless shelters. There are 200 Bright Spaces located in social service organizations in 35 states around the U.S. and in Europe, serving thousands of children each year. More information is at [www.brighthorizons.com/foundation](http://www.brighthorizons.com/foundation).

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