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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Second annual Nicole's Promise provides shopping, holiday cheer for children affected by addiction

EASTON – Grace Street and the Talbot County Sheriff's Office on Dec. 11 held the second annual Christmas shopping program for children and teens affected by substance use.

The program, called Nicole's Promise, directly supports young people who have lost a parent to addiction with a special shopping trip with Talbot County Sheriff's deputies. Nicole's Promise also includes a Christmas gift drive for children and teens with a parent struggling with, or in early recovery from, substance use disorder.

The program is in honor of Nicole, a young woman who lost her life to addiction and left behind six children.

Talbot County Sheriff Joe Gamble, who has long supported recovery and has spearheaded prevention efforts in the region with Talbot Goes Purple and other programs, participated in the program alongside his deputies Wednesday night. Seventeen children, ages 4 to 16, gathered at the sheriff's office and met with Santa, who gave each a small gift, before everyone headed over – lights and sirens – to Target.

At Target, each child shopped with a deputy and filled carts with gifts for themselves, and for family members. One young boy tried his best to hide a gift for his mother, who also was there, burying the present under a squishmallow. Another child had made a list and sped through the trip with impressive decisiveness, selecting winter boots that lit up, gloves, a winter hat and a few toys. Carts filled with items both practical and fun, while the anonymous donor encouraged each to continue shopping and enjoyed seeing their purchases.

Target provided popcorn for the children and deputies, along with wrapping paper and bows. After the shopping, the group went back to the sheriff's office for hot cocoa, Grinch punch and pizza while Sheriff Gamble and the deputies helped wrap gifts.

"I have seen too many families get torn apart by this disease of addiction, and the hardest hit are the children that get left behind when a parent overdoses," said Gamble. "We're glad that we can help bring some holiday cheer to those kids as we continue our fight against the opioid epidemic."

Nicole's Promise also includes two gift wishes each for children with a parent struggling with, or in recovery from, substance use. To donate or purchase gifts off the wish list, visit gracestreetrecovery.org.

Grace Street is the area's first recovery community organization (RCO). RCOs are a nationally recognized model that help bridge the gap between professional treatment and a successful life in long-term recovery through enhanced supports and services.

Easton's center delivers an assortment of non-clinical, community-centered, peer recovery support services; harm reduction resources; workforce training and development; youth programming; overdose prevention activities and resources; and support groups. Grace Street serves people across the Mid-Shore. Referrals are not necessary, and services are free.

Grace Street is a component fund of Chesapeake Charities, a community foundation based in Stevensville. Donations are tax deductible and can be made online at GraceStreetRecovery.org.

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