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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Paramedics Attend to a Different Kind of Emergency**

**2006/11/10** – On November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 ambulances from across Manitoba will be pulling into local schools with lights flashing and sirens blaring, but for a different kind of emergency. They will be embarking on a unique and compassionate mission that will touch the lives of millions of underprivileged children around the world.

Paramedics will volunteer their time and use off duty ambulances to collect shoeboxes from schools and daycares across Manitoba in partnership with Operation Christmas Child (OCC). These shoeboxes, filled with toys, school supplies, hygiene items and small gifts are destined for underprivileged children worldwide suffering the effects of poverty, sickness, war or natural disaster. For most of these children, living in desperate circumstances, a single shoebox will be the only Christmas present they will receive.

"Manitoba Paramedics became involved with Operation Christmas Child five years ago, with one ambulance and one school" says Meaghan Webb, Paramedic and OCC Project Coordinator. "This year we expect to have 17 ambulances collecting from close to 40 schools and we hope to collect more than 5000 shoeboxes. Due to the growth of the shoebox campaign we're forced to spread it over two days this year. November 16<sup>th</sup> we will collect from rural communities, and on November 17<sup>th</sup> we'll collect from Winnipeg and surrounding areas" adds Webb.

In recognition of the effort that Manitoba students put into preparing the gift shoeboxes, and to celebrate Operation Christmas Child and the happiness these shoeboxes will bring to kids around the world, the collection will culminate in a parade of ambulances. The gift filled ambulances will gather in Winnipeg at the intersection of Portage Ave and Moray on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. We ask the public not to be alarmed as we parade down Portage Avenue to Main Street and north to Eastview Community Church with our lights and sirens on.

Paramedics from Winnipeg, Interlake, South Eastman, North Eastman and Central Regional Health Authorities will join emergency services personnel across Canada in collecting shoeboxes from local schools to mark the 14th season of Operation Christmas Child. Supported by relief agency Samaritans Purse, Operation Christmas Child is the world's largest Christmas project. This year shoeboxes from Canada will be distributed to underprivileged children in 18 countries.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba is the professional association for paramedics licensed in Manitoba, promoting excellence in pre-hospital emergency medical care.

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