



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 20, 2009

**Contact Information**

Sean Gaffney

856.264.8364

masons.mission@gmail.com

**Mason's Mission – A Mother Will Stop at Nothing to Raise Awareness of Her Son's Rare Neurological Disorder**

**Atco, NJ, May 20, 2009** - The family of a young boy who has been diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder, has started a fundraiser to help raise awareness and donations for this very unpublicized disorder. Almost 3 years old, Mason Gaffney, the inspiration behind this fundraiser, entitled, "Mason's Mission," has a disorder called Chiari Malformation. One hundred percent of the profits and proceeds from all of their efforts go to the American Syringomyelia & Chiari Alliance Project, Inc.

Melanie Gaffney, Mason's mother, was frustrated by the lack of public knowledge and support of this rare disorder. After her son's diagnosis, Melanie and her husband Sean's world was flipped upside down. Just trying to find information was hard since it isn't a very common disease or disorder, but trying to find a person who specialized in this disorder proved to be even harder. Frustrated at the thought of having to take Mason from the best pediatric hospital in the country to another institution was so mind boggling that Melanie knew she had to raise as much awareness as she could.

Chiari Malformation is a serious neurological disorder where the bottom part of the brain, the cerebellum, descends out of the skull and crowds the spinal cord, putting pressure on both the brain and spine. A few of the symptoms that people afflicted with this disorder can experience are severe, debilitating headaches, balance and coordination problems, gait abnormalities, pain and weakness in the arms and legs, and trouble speaking and swallowing. In some cases patients develop Hydrocephalus, fluid on the brain, which results in compression of parts of the brain and spinal cord, and disrupts the normal flow of cerebrospinal fluid (a clear fluid which bathes the brain and spinal cord). If left untreated this can cause brain damage, paralysis and even death.

This determined family has designed and started a Web site, [www.masons-mission.com](http://www.masons-mission.com), to help bring more awareness to this disorder. Here, you can learn more about Chiari Malformation, find resources to help those afflicted, donate, volunteer, read about brave little Mason and sign the guest book. The Web site also spotlights Chiari Heroes, including a section that encourages those afflicted, family members or people in the medical field to write about their experiences.

This year they will be hosting the first annual Family Fun Day. The Family Fun Day is the biggest fundraising event of the year for Mason's Mission and will take place September 20th, 2009, at Kid Junction in Mt. Laurel, N.J., from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The fundraiser goal is to have services such as mini art sessions, music classes, etc. for the kids as well as chair massages and treats for the adults. All of this in addition to the arcade, indoor playground and imagination play areas that Kid Junction already offers. Each paying child and adult will also be offered a family-style buffet of fun food that will also include beverages and dessert; this is a 100 percent peanut-free environment.

We are still looking for vendors and sponsors. Those interested should contact Melanie at [masons.mission@gmail.com](mailto:masons.mission@gmail.com).

We know that without public awareness and publicizing this disorder as much as possible, the funds cannot be raised for research. The Gaffneys have made it their mission to make Chiari Malformation a household name, to help teach the public about the symptoms and to make more resources available.

For additional information on Mason's Mission contact Melanie Gaffney at [masons.mission@gmail.com](mailto:masons.mission@gmail.com) or visit [www.masons-mission.com](http://www.masons-mission.com).

Mason's Mission is an organization that is determined to heighten awareness and raise funds for the neurological disorder Chiari Malformation. All proceeds and donations will be donated directly to the American Syringomyelia & Chiari Alliance Project, Inc. (ASAP, Inc), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing research, education and support for Chiari Malformation.

\*\*\*\*\*