



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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***NEWS***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Approximately 75% of the children in foster care are separated, leaving each child to navigate the child welfare system without their brothers and sisters. In response to this unfortunate situation, the Association established Camp HepSIBah Sibling Camp in 2003 to bring foster siblings together in a fun and memorable way.

This year's Camp HepSIBah ran from Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> through Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> at the YMCA Camp Duncan in Ingleside, IL. Sixty-four children participated in the program which included traditional "sleep away camp" favorites such as swimming and boating, archery, wall climbing, and an adventurous night nature hike -- plus old fashioned games like "Capture the Flag" and Kickball.

As part of the arts and crafts program, Payless Shoe Source generously donated 65 pairs of their popular Friendship Shoe. Each pair of white canvas shoes comes with a package of colorful markers for children to creatively decorate their friends' (or in this case, siblings') shoes. When they finished the project, the children were able to take home a wearable memento of their experience at Camp HepSIBah.

Fun activities plus an uninterrupted time together, helped the boys and girls repair bonds broken by months of separation, and provided a foundation on which to build positive childhood memories. The ultimate goal of Camp HepSIBah is to help the children strengthen their fragile family ties – which they will carry well into adulthood.

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