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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cincinnati Child Life Leader Receives Child Life Council's Highest Honor



Rockville, MD – April 13, 2009 – The Child Life Council, the leading nonprofit professional association serving child life specialists, announced today the selection of Sharon McLeod, Senior Clinical Director of the Child Life Division of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, as the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Service Award.

The Distinguished Service Award is presented once a year by the Child Life Council Executive Board to an individual in the field of child life who has significantly contributed to the development of the profession. As a group, child life professionals provide emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences, particularly those related to healthcare and hospitalization. They work in a variety of settings to promote effective coping through play, preparation, education, and self-expression activities.

Sharon McLeod has long been a respected leader in the child life professional community. During her nearly 33 years as a child life specialist, she has held a variety of CLC leadership positions, often during key periods of growth and change for the organization. She served as the CLC Executive Board Secretary from 1986-1988, President-Elect/President from 1996-2000, and has led a number of CLC committees and task forces over the years, including the Child Life Certifying Committee from 2005-2008. In 2009 she was elected to serve a two-year term as the Board Treasurer.

"I take great pride in CLC, and in the part I have played in our progress as a volunteer leader," says McLeod.

McLeod began her career in 1976 as the child life coordinator at Swedish American Hospital in Rockford, Illinois, before moving on to a position as the director of child life services at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee in 1984. In 1992, she found her dream position directing a large child life program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Currently the Senior Clinical Director of the Child Life Division, McLeod is very proud of the growth that has been achieved during her 17-year tenure at Cincinnati Children's. Her program has grown from a staff of 20 to nearly 100 employees, making it one of the largest child life programs in the world. McLeod attributes much of this success to interdisciplinary collaboration. "We are really valued by the rest of the healthcare team," she says. "They see us as essential, and that has been key to our growth."

McLeod is a well-known speaker at child life conferences, presenting on a wide variety of topics, including management and administrative issues in child life, career and clinical advancement, and developing family-centered environments, among many others. Closer to home, she has worked as an instructor at School of Health Science and Nursing for the University of Cincinnati, and the School of Behavioral Health at the College of Mount Saint Joseph.

The CLC Distinguished Service Award will be presented to McLeod on May 24, during the Closing General Session of the 27th Annual Conference on Professional Issues in Boston, Massachusetts.

About Child Life Council

The Child Life Council, Inc. is the leading membership association serving child life professionals as they empower children and families to master challenging life events. Founded as a nonprofit organization in 1982, Child Life Council provides members with professional development programs and resources, advances best practices, and distributes information about the needs of children experiencing stress and trauma. Membership is currently composed of nearly 4,000 individuals representing more than 600 organizations worldwide. Our members include child life specialists, child life assistants, university educators and students, hospital administrators and staff, school teachers, therapeutic recreation specialists, and others in related fields. To learn more about Child Life Council and the child life profession, please visit our Web site at www.childlife.org.

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