

CONTACT: Tim Young/Christopher Boniface
L.C. Williams & Associates
800/837-7123 or 312/565-3900
tyoung@lcwa.com

Paula Erickson
ACE HARDWARE CORP.
630/990-6920
erickson@acehardware.com

**ACE HARDWARE'S 'HELPFUL RIDERS' TO EMBARK
ON CROSS-COUNTRY CHARITY BIKE RIDE TO RAISE
\$1 MILLION FOR CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK**

OAK BROOK, Ill. – June 13, 2005 – A “relay team” of 44 Ace Hardware “Helpful Riders” will bicycle coast to coast this summer to raise \$1 million for Children’s Miracle Network (CMN) hospitals. The nine-week charity drive begins June 18 in Seattle and will take volunteer cyclists 4,300 miles from the waters of the Puget Sound to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

Riding under the banner of the second annual Tour de Kids, a separate contingent of Ace retailers, executives, corporate employees and numerous vendor partners will join other biking enthusiasts signed up for Cycle America’s Seattle-to-Boston trek during the nine legs of the ride. Some three to six different “Helpful Riders” will tackle each of the nine arduous legs on the ride.

“Helpful Riders” have secured donations from vendor partners and throughout the Ace Hardware organization. To date, the group has raised approximately \$700,000 to be donated directly to CMN. Last year, a group of 13 “Helpful Riders” pedaled from Chicago to St. Louis and raised \$330,000 for CMN-affiliated hospitals in the two cities.

Consumers also can join in the “drive” by making donations via www.acetourdekids.com.

“We had such strong support from the Ace family and our vendor partners last year that we were eager to ride again for the direct benefit of children’s hospitals nationwide,” said Jimmy Alexander, vice president of human resources for Ace Hardware, who oversees Ace’s charitable contributions made through the Ace Hardware Foundation. “This is a true ‘grassroots’ effort of a small group of individuals who know that by their very actions they can – and will – make a difference.”

Dave Myer, veteran “Helpful Rider” and senior vice president international and paint for Ace Hardware, agreed. “I can’t get over the thrill of riding last year. This summer’s trek will be another chance for all of us to make a difference.”

Returning “Helpful Rider” Chris Hankla has personal reasons for riding. “This gives me an opportunity to do something fun and challenging that will benefit those children who are sick or injured,” he explained. “I have some close friends whose children have benefited from the excellent care at CMN hospitals, so I know first-hand the positive impact they can have.”

The first group of “Helpful Riders” will start with Cycle America from downtown Seattle. After crossing the Cascades, the group will ride through Idaho and Montana. The second leg will begin in Missoula, Mont., and culminate in Jackson, Wyo. Riders of the third portion will cross Wyoming from Jackson to Devil’s Tower.

Then, “Helpful Riders” of the fourth leg will travel from Devil’s Tower to Pierre, S.D., while the fifth group will take off from Pierre and travel to Northfield, Minn., south

of the Twin Cities. "Heartland Patchwork," the name given the sixth leg, will end in Manitowoc, Wis.

Cyclists of leg seven will take a ferry to Ludington, Mich., from which point they will travel to Niagara Falls, Ontario. The trip through the Empire State will begin in Niagara Falls and end in the Adirondack town of Lake Placid, N.Y. The final leg will end Aug. 20 in Gloucester, Mass., on the Atlantic coast. A special finale event will take place at Tags Ace Hardware in Cambridge to celebrate the completion of the cross-country ride and fundraising drive.

Major sponsors of this year's Tour de Kids include Duracell, Ames True Temper, Henkel Consumer Adhesives, Gardner Bender, GTI, Adobear, Shurline, Cooper Wiring Devices and Charlotte Pipe.

CMN's 170 member hospitals throughout North America will benefit from this year's donations. The dollars raised will be used at these state-of-the-art facilities to provide the needed health care for children, regardless of their families' ability to pay.

Ace Hardware Corp. is the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the industry. Annual retail sales for Ace's hardware, home center and lumber and building materials locations top \$13 billion. Headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill., Ace currently operates 15 distribution centers in the United States and its retailers' stores are located in all 50 states and 70 countries. Ace ranks in the top 10 of all corporate Children's Miracle Network sponsors and has raised nearly \$30 million for CMN hospitals since 1991. More information on Ace can be found at www.acehardware.com.

###