



Contact:  
We Canceve Movement  
[www.wecanceve.org](http://www.wecanceve.org)  
202.491.3586

For immediate release  
September 10, 2017

## **We Canceve Collects Halloween Costumes for Area Homeless Children**

*Harford County's Erin Acerno leads new project for all-youth led nonprofit that helps homeless, sick and foster children*

(BEL AIR, MD) – Little fingers and bright eyes are now finding costumes and masks of choice in stores across our area in preparation of a nighttime favorite: trick-or-treat. But missing from store aisles are homeless children whose families can't afford costumes or masks. They can't even afford to live in neighborhoods with door bells to ring and spooky decorations on light posts to approach with cautious excitement.

Southampton Middle School's Erin Acerno is spearheading a brand-new initiative for the We Canceve Movement, Inc. to help homeless children feel included in the Fall fun.

Acerno, 11, created "Halloween Haunt-me-downs" to collect new and gently-used Halloween costumes for children of all ages who currently live in transitional housing programs for homeless families and homeless shelters like Anna's House in Bel Air, Harford Family House in Aberdeen and the Eastside Family Emergency Shelter in Rosedale. The community is invited to drop off costumes until October 21, which builds in just enough time to sort through the collection and deliver them to area shelters.

"This project is important to me because Halloween is a fun time of year for kids and all children should be able to enjoy it as an exciting part of their childhood memories no matter what circumstances they are in. All kids should just be allowed to feel 'normal,'" said Acerno, a rising 7<sup>th</sup> grader. "I think it's especially meaningful to homeless kids because they are in an awful situation where they often feel left out or different from other kids. If they can have a nice costume like everyone else, they can relate to the other kids better and not feel like an outsider because they're homeless."

Acerno secured three drop-off locations for the community, thanks to support she solicited from the studio where she dances, Rage Box Contemporary Dance Company in Forest Hills, her church St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Abingdon and from Tiny Toes boutique in downtown Bel Air.

"I love the costumes and dressing up because you can be whoever you want to be that day - with no limits, just imagination," said Acerno, who's also an accomplished child actress. She also appears on Harford Kids TV.

She said her favorite costume, of all time, was Maleficent. "I like dressing up as a villain because it's cool to explore a side of yourself that you'd never show in real life." Acerno is serving her third year as a member of the all-youth board of advisors.

The We Canceve Movement is a nonprofit organization that creates giving opportunities that can be supported by the community to bring happiness to homeless, sick and foster children. In 2016, We Canceve Movement, Inc. was named an Honor Rows recipient by M&T Bank, the Baltimore Ravens and the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism for their community service. To date, We Canceve has donated 1,193 Eggstra Special Easter Baskets to area homeless, sick and foster children since its first donation in 2012; \$10,500 in cash grants and \$25,000 in products to five hospitals including Sinai Hospital in Baltimore and University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center in Bel Air; eight homeless shelters and transitional programs; local feeding ministries The Sharing Table and St. John's Episcopal Church's Cupboard; an orphanage in Catonsville and two foster care group homes.

For more information, please contact the We Canceve Movement, Inc., at [peoplewhocare@wecanceve.org](mailto:peoplewhocare@wecanceve.org).