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For immediate release
December 27, 2017

Area Youth Invited to Apply for Board Membership of We Canceve Movement, Inc.

(Abingdon, MD) – The We Canceve Movement, Inc., a Maryland-run nonprofit organization, invites youth ages 8-18 in Harford and Baltimore counties and Baltimore city to apply for one of five seats now open on its all-youth board of advisors. This is the first time We Canceve is recruiting new board members by application.

“I really want 2018 to be a year of change and development for We Canceve, and that all starts with my Board Members and myself,” said Grace Callwood, who founded We Canceve in 2012, at age seven, to identify easy and low-cost ways children could help meet the immediate needs of some of the most vulnerable children in their communities: homeless, sick and foster children. Callwood, who was named a 2015 Peace First Fellow at age 10, believes “there is no age limit on helping others. Young people are always being restricted on what we can or cannot do, but we will not put an age limit on who can help those in need.”

She credits a November business meeting in New York City’s financial district with executives from BlackRock as a catalyst for making such a big change in her organization. While there as a Peace First Fellow, she participated in a “Brain Trust,” or meeting that brought together experts from various disciplines to address a single business challenge. For Callwood, it was looking at an expansion plan to answer requests she’s received to form regional chapters from people in South Carolina, Ohio and California. In that discussion, she realized she could extend greater roles and responsibilities to her board.

“With a strong board, we will be able to do so much in the future that will lead us to help bring more impactful projects and initiatives, and new ideas that benefit sick, foster, and homeless children,” said Callwood, now 13. She was named the 2017 Youth Honoree of the Maryland Governor’s Service Award, presented by the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism.

The organization’s work is performed mostly by its all-youth board of advisors, who rely on their parents and other adults for “guidance, communication, transportation, networking, and much more that us kiddos need help with! We can brainstorm, design and lead our own projects, but most of us can’t drive ourselves to meetings and events,” she said.

Members of the advisory board meet quarterly in a formal business meeting led by Callwood. During each meeting, advisors are able to present new program ideas to the body for review and approval. Parents are supporters to the advisors but are not board members; while their input and support are valuable, the youth advisors are the creative visionaries who have for five years contributed to We Canceve’s success to date. Callwood established two We Canceve Funds at the Community Foundation of Harford County, where the majority of their donations are received and their grantmaking efforts are facilitated.

Ideal applicants, according to the website, are youth who have maintained a grade point averages at 2.5 or higher and who understand that “teamwork truly makes this dreamwork because as board members who are also children, we want to feel included and we want to contribute to the work of the organization.”

Applications are available at www.wecanceve.org and are being accepted January 1 through February 9. Top candidates will be interviewed and notified by email and/or phone before February 28. All board members must agree to attend the four quarterly meetings, held the first Fridays of the month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Harford County.

“It’s important that our board members understand the populations we serve and we do that when we all have teachable spirits that help us be not only open-minded, but also seek out information to learn what homeless, sick and children need instead of just assuming we know what’s best for them. We are very sensitive to not creating more work or burdens for the staffs at the places we help so it’s important we understand the best ways we can really help” said Callwood, who was named a 2016 NICKELODEON HALO Award Honoree.

Callwood said the most important quality she’s looking for in board members is, however, is sincerity.

“We do our work whole-heartedly, genuinely, with no strings attached. Plain and simple. We don't do this for the awards, or the recognitions or the publicity. We do this because this is what we love to do. I want board members that would work hard, even if no one knew it. We could be totally ignored and unnoticed, and it wouldn't bother any of us as long as the children get what they need, we are happy.”

We Canceve operates a free summer day camp at two Harford County transitional housing programs for homeless families and opened a full-service boutique to provide modern new and like-new clothes for work and worship for teen girls in foster care at a Bel Air group home. A full list of projects can be found on their website.

Those benefitting from We Canceve efforts include **(Homeless Shelters & Programs)** Anna's House, Bel Air; Booth House by Salvation Army, Baltimore; Eastside Family Emergency Shelter, Rosedale; Hope in Action Homeless Outreach Ministries, Jarrettsville; Harford Family House, Aberdeen; INNterim Transitional Housing for Homeless Women & Children, Pikesville; Karis House Homeless Shelter, Baltimore; SARC, Belcamp; St. Vincent de Paul Hannah Moore House, Reisterstown; St. Vincent de Paul Sarah's Hope at Mount Street, Baltimore; Wayfarers' House, Elkton; and Youth Empowerment Society (YES) Drop-in Center for Homeless Youth, Baltimore; **(Foster Care Group Homes & Orphanages)** Arrow Child & Family Ministries Arrow Crossroads, Bel Air; Arrow Child & Family Ministries Cromwell Bridge, Towson; The Children's Home, Catonsville; **(Children's Hospitals & Medical Programs)** Children's Hospital at Sinai, Baltimore; Hackerman-Patz House, a Lifebridge Health Property; Johns Hopkins Pediatric Hospital; Ronald McDonald House, Baltimore; St. Agnes Pediatric Emergency Room, Baltimore; University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center, Bel Air; **(Community Programs for Homeless & Hungry)** Bel Air United Methodist Church Feeding Ministry, Bel Air; Lots of Love Food Pantry, Edgewood; Mason Dixon Community Service, Darlington; St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church Outreach Ministry, Abingdon; St. John's Cupboard at St. John's Episcopal Church, Havre de Grace; and The Sharing Table, Edgewood.

Peace First is a national nonprofit that invests in young people's ideas, provides them with tools and skills, connects them with other awesome young people around the world and shares their stories and impact with the world

For more information about We Canceve, email peoplewhocare@wecanceve.org.

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