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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Children's Cardiomyopathy Awareness Month Calls Attention to a "Silent Killer"**

**TENAFLY, N.J.—August 30, 2019** — According to the American Heart Association, each year more than 7,000 children age 18 years and younger experience sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle, is a leading cause of SCA in children.

Diagnosing children with cardiomyopathy is challenging, and it can be missed. Because symptoms are not always apparent, it is often referred to as a "silent killer." Children with cardiomyopathy who are not diagnosed face a higher risk of sudden cardiac death, particularly if they are competitive athletes.

Driven by the need to raise awareness of sudden cardiac arrest associated with cardiomyopathy, the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) established September as Children's Cardiomyopathy Awareness Month. Awareness month is intended to educate the public about the signs, symptoms, and risk factors for cardiomyopathy. Knowing these signs and symptoms can help identify at-risk children and get them the appropriate medical attention.

Protecting children from sudden death is a top priority for CCF – a non-profit established in 2002 by Lisa Yue, a mother who lost two children to cardiomyopathy. CCF is a national organization focused on increasing research, education, and awareness of cardiomyopathies affecting children.

"This September we urge physicians, nurses, coaches, teachers and community leaders to join us in raising awareness of cardiomyopathy," said Lisa Yue, founding executive director. "We also want to stress the importance of knowing your family cardiovascular health history. Many times, parents are not aware of relatives affected by heart disease until after their own child is diagnosed.

Myesha Bruce is one such parent. Her daughter, Ahsha died five months before her first birthday from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Following genetic testing, Myesha then learned that both her father and grandmother had cardiomyopathy.

"More needs to be done to raise awareness of this disease," said Bruce. "Knowing the signs of cardiomyopathy and my own family history might have given Ahsha a fighting chance."

CCF will celebrate awareness month with 15 national partners this year, including the American College of Cardiology, American Heart Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of School Nurses, and National Alliance for Youth Sports. To celebrate the month, there will be 30 days of awareness activities to educate the public on the importance of #KnowYourHeart. CCF will also host the 5th Annual Walk for a Cure in New Jersey. Visit CCF's website for more information and a list of awareness month partners: [www.childrenscardiomyopathy.org](http://www.childrenscardiomyopathy.org).

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## **About the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation**

The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) is a national organization focused on finding causes and cures for all forms of pediatric cardiomyopathy, a chronic and potentially life-threatening heart disease. The Foundation was formed in 2002 to accelerate research, increase public awareness, and offer support services for cardiomyopathy families. Since then, CCF has grown into a global community of families, physicians and scientists raising more than \$13.4 million for research and education initiatives, family support, and advocacy and awareness measures.

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