

For Release 11:15am Tuesday, Nov 29, 2005

A Gift from MDS Nordion, Tom Hanks' "Space Mouse" Unveiled at The Hospital for Sick Children

November 29, 2005 – TORONTO: "Space Mouse," the 6 foot tall, 700 pound Mickey Mouse statue that Canadian Life Sciences Company MDS Nordion donated to SickKids Foundation in honour of James Birrell to help lift the spirits of children living with illness, was unveiled in the Atrium of The Hospital for Sick Children today. In attendance was the family of James Birrell, including father: Syd, mother: Pam, sister: Rebecca (13), brother: Ben (9) and aunt: Diana, along with The Hospital For Sick Children and SickKids Foundation dignitaries, MDS Inc. and MDS Nordion executives, other neuroblastoma children and families, patients of The Hospital for Sick Children and James Fund supporters. A tour of Dr. Kaplan's Neuroblastoma Research lab followed.

"Space Mouse" will make his permanent home in the cafeteria having made the trip from Sotheby's in New York where he was auctioned off on September 27th. Designed by Tom Hanks, "Space Mouse" was one of the more popular 75 person sized Mickey Mouse Statues auctioned by Sotheby's and The Walt Disney Company as the culmination of celebrations commemorating the 75th anniversary of the world's most famous mouse. Space Mouse sold to MDS Nordion for \$18,000 (\$15,000 US), which will benefit The James Fund, Canada's leading fund fighting neuroblastoma, a deadly form of childhood cancer. Hanks is the James Fund's Honourary Patron. The James Fund was established in the name of James Birrell to fight the disease that ultimately killed him.

"James died of neuroblastoma – but more importantly, he *lived* with it. He lived life to the fullest and found adventure in every day," said Syd Birrell, James' father. "James would have loved that so many people have come together today to give something so fun and whimsical to other children who will, for a time, call this hospital home. There are few greater gifts than a moment of joy in a time of trouble – and thanks to MDS Nordion, Disney and Tom Hanks, this enduring symbol of joy will live here at The Hospital for Sick Children, where James received such excellent care."

"James Birrell was an inspiration to the employees of MDS Nordion. We are very pleased with the opportunity to continue supporting The James Fund and ultimately finding a cure for Neuroblastoma," said Steve West, President of MDS Nordion.

"'Space Mouse' is a beacon of hope for neuroblastoma families and those scientists and researchers who have devoted their lives to finding a cure for this cancer," said Sharon Avery, Director of Corporate Partnerships, SickKids Foundation. "Some day soon, however, we hope 'Space Mouse' becomes a monument to the struggle waged -- and won -- against the disease that claimed James, a brave little boy who was determined to fight cancer."

.../2

...2

“Space Mouse” Background

Tom Hanks designed Space Mouse with James in mind having befriended him over the phone and through letters where they shared a mutual fascination about space. Hanks also starred in James’ favourite movie, “Apollo 13,” the true story of three astronauts who battled incredible odds to make it back home when all seemed lost.

Information on Syd Birrell’s book: “Ya Can’t Let Cancer Ruin Your Day”

James’ remarkable and spirited fight against neuroblastoma is the subject of an uplifting and inspiring book by his father Syd, called “Ya Can’t Let Cancer Ruin Your Day.” With a foreword by Tom Hanks, the book is a collection of journals Syd wrote and shared via email throughout James’ five-year illness, chronicling not only James’ fight against cancer, but also the extraordinary adventures they shared as a family as they tried to pack as much living into the very short time they had left with James.

The book, which was released this summer with the generous support of MDS Nordion, has sold briskly. The book is available both at Chapters and Indigo stores nation-wide and also at Indigo.ca (\$19.93, the year of James’ birth); the book is also available at www.greentrainbooks.com. A portion of the proceeds from each book benefits The James Fund at SickKids.

Background on Tom Hanks’ involvement with James

Mr. Hanks contacted James by phone after learning of James’ fascination with the Apollo 13 story and a friendship began. Shortly after James’ death, he wrote about the impact of his connection to James.

“James Birrell was a good kid,” **Tom Hanks wrote the family**. “James was a cheerful voice on the phone and a diligent pen pal who was a big fan of space ships and railroad trains. When neuroblastoma took James away, that word was new and ugly.”

About The James Fund for Neuroblastoma Research at SickKids

The James Fund was established at SickKids Foundation by the family of James Birrell to generate funds and knowledge leading to new therapies for the treatment of patients with neuroblastoma. It has rapidly grown to be Canada’s leading neuroblastoma research initiative and actor Tom Hanks is its Honourary Patron. To date, nine research projects have been funded, six papers published, a drug-testing unit has been established and several international collaborations are underway bringing new hope to the parents of children suffering from this terrible childhood cancer.

.../3

...3

About Neuroblastoma

Neuroblastoma is a type of childhood cancer that begins in the embryonic cells which normally develop into parts of our nervous system. Neuroblastoma usually occurs in children under the age of five and is the most common type of tumor found in babies under one year of age. Over the last twenty years there has been modest improvement, due to research, in the prognosis for children diagnosed with neuroblastoma at less than one year of age, however, despite research initiatives, there has been little improvement in the prognosis for older children with widespread disease at diagnosis. In seventy percent of patients the original tumor has already spread to other parts of the body before any symptoms are seen. The vast majority of these children die.

About MDS Nordion's Role with The James Fund

MDS Nordion played a small role in James' treatment during his battle with neuroblastoma supplying the medical isotope, iodine-123, for a drug used to diagnose and monitor the disease. However, through circumstances, the company developed a lasting relationship with the Birrell family.

About MDS Nordion

MDS Nordion (www.mds.nordion.com) is a world leader in radioisotopes, radiation and related technologies. MDS Nordion is part of MDS Inc. (TSX:MDS; NYSE:MDZ). MDS Inc. has more than 8,800 highly skilled people in 27 countries. MDS Inc. provides a diverse range of superior products and services to increase our customers' speed, precision and productivity in the drug development and disease diagnosis processes. MDS Inc. is a global, values-driven health and life sciences company, recognized for our reliability and collaborative relationships as we help create better outcomes in the treatment of disease. Find out more at www.mdsinc.com or by calling 1-888-MDS-7222, 24 hours a day.

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: SYD BIRRELL AND FAMILY AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW; B-ROLL, HEADSHOTS AND ART AVAILABLE INCLUDING OF JAMES ALSO OF SPACE MOUSE.

For additional information and/or to arrange for an interview, please contact:

Susan McLennan
for the Birrell Family and The James Fund
Babble On Communications
Ph: (416) 699-1846; Cell: (416) 525-5177; Email: s.mclennan@sympatico.ca

Shelley Maclean
External Communications Specialist, MDS Nordion
Tel: (613) 592-3400 ext. 2414; Cell: (613) 614-7997; Email: Shelley.Maclean@mdsinc.com