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### **Celeste L. Edmunds Inspires 1,100 Utah Caseworkers with Free Offering of “Garbage Bag Girl” in Honor of International Women’s Day**

Salt Lake City, March 8, 2024 — In celebration of International Women's Day, marked by the theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress," Celeste L. Edmunds, acclaimed author of the stirring memoir "Garbage Bag Girl," is seizing the opportunity to empower and uplift 1,100 Utah caseworkers by offering them a free copy of her book. These dedicated caseworkers, comprising 84% women nationally, play a pivotal role in our communities, offering crucial emotional support to families navigating fractured systems and diligently working to connect them with vital services.

Celeste L. Edmunds's memoir is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the resilience inherent in every individual. Through an unfiltered and honest narrative, Edmunds shares her poignant journey, triumphing over the adversity of a childhood marked by abuse and neglect. Her story resonates deeply with those in the child welfare system, prompting Juvenile Judge V. of Iowa to say, "Your story needs to be shared with judges, attorneys, and other players in the child welfare system. It helps us remember how our work impacts others."

In "Garbage Bag Girl," Edmunds shares her harrowing journey from darkness to advocacy, offering readers a poignant glimpse into her challenges. At the tender age of seven, Edmunds was taken into the state's care, entering a child welfare system that subjected her to frequent relocations, each new environment bringing its own set of abuse. Living out of a garbage bag became the norm, and by the time she reached sixteen, she had called more than 30 cities home.

"My childhood was a difficult and often unbearable experience where evil manipulation almost broke my spirit. But there were also caring people along the way who stepped in to do what they could to protect and nurture me," said Edmunds. "As an adult, I look back at those moments and realize they saved my life. My goal is to help as many children as possible in the child welfare system and help to ensure that they have the opportunities for success that I was not provided. To help those children is to help the social workers that serve them."

Inspired by Edmunds, Tonya Myrup, Director of the Department of Human Services states, “In an incredibly moving story, Garbage Bag Girl explores the challenges of growing up in the child welfare system and prompts contemplation on ways to support children in care better today. I was inspired by Celeste's determination and resilience and the offering of hope her story provides. I feel Garbage Bag Girl will serve as a reminder to always remember to view the child welfare system through the eyes of the children experiencing it.”

**About the Book:** "Garbage Bag Girl" is a gripping first-person account that delves into Celeste Edmunds' life, a young woman who, against all odds, found strength and resilience in the face of adversity. Raised by drug-addicted parents, Edmunds learned to protect her siblings in a harsh environment filled with threats from rapists and drug dealers. The state eventually intervened, separating the family, and Edmunds was adopted into a dysfunctional home where she faced mistreatment from a sadistic mother. Contemplating drastic measures, she ran away, seeking shelter wherever she could until a compassionate woman extended a helping hand, offering her a safe and nurturing environment filled with love and teaching her that it is never too late to find "home."

**Endorsements:** Renowned figures in literature and child welfare have praised "Garbage Bag Girl" for its raw honesty and impactful storytelling. #1 International Bestselling Author Dave Pelzer commends Edmunds for her resilience, noting her legendary service to those in need. Diane Moore, Former Director of Utah's Division of Child and Family Services, hails Edmunds as a profile in courage and resiliency, highlighting the importance of loving family connections for every child.

**Availability:** "Garbage Bag Girl" is available for purchase through Amazon.com. Edmunds will be at Dolly's Bookstore, 510 Main St., Park City, UT on March 8 at 2 p.m. for a book signing.

**About Celeste L. Edmunds:**

Celeste L. Edmunds is Executive Director of The Christmas Box International, an organization that has provided more than 155,000 children a safe and nurturing environment as they begin to navigate the child welfare system. Celeste is a passionate advocate for children's welfare, dedicating her life to supporting those who have experienced hardship. "Garbage Bag Girl" reflects her commitment to using personal experiences to inspire hope and resilience in others.

**About Richard Paul Evans:**

Richard Paul Evans, founder of The Christmas Box International is a forty-six-time #1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author renowned for his impactful storytelling and inspirational works. His endorsement of "Garbage Bag Girl" underscores the significance of Celeste L. Edmunds' narrative.

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