

For Immediate Release

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT OF COMPASSION PROGRAMS BY NAMING *ALADDIN*'S "GENIE" AS ITS OFFICIAL WISH GRANTING CHARACTER

Make-A-Wish Foundation® and Others to Benefit from "Genie"

BURBANK, Calif. and PHOENIX (March 25, 2003) – The lovable "Genie" from Walt Disney Pictures' *Aladdin* will make sure dreams come true for children from children's charities such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation, as Disney rubs its magic lamp and names Genie its official wish granting character. Through DisneyHand, the worldwide outreach for The Walt Disney Company, Genie will help children with life-threatening illnesses to fulfill their wishes.

Disney has been a supporter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation since the charity's inception in 1980. One of the Foundation's most requested wishes every year is a visit to a Disney theme park. In 2002, Disney granted more than 5,000 children's wishes, including visits to Disney theme parks, Disney cruises, and nearly 50,000 complimentary theme park tickets, amounting to more than \$10 million in support for wish programs.

Disney's support extends well beyond tickets. Disney continues to be supportive of the Foundation by creating public service announcements for the ABC Television Network and offering wish children specialized Disney gift packs and other VIP perks, including character visits, product donations, tickets for sporting and ice events, private movie screenings, movie and TV experiences, and special privileges aboard The Disney Cruise Lines.

"The Make-A-Wish Foundation is excited to utilize the Genie in our mission to put a smile on the faces of children and families who often struggle to smile," said Paula Van Ness, president and CEO of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America. "But, I am convinced the Walt Disney Company is full of genies. How else could we explain the boundless joy experienced by thousands of wish kids and their families over the years who have enjoyed a Disney experience?"

When he's not granting wishes for children, the Genie can be found at the Hyperion Theater in Disney's California Adventure park in Anaheim, where he stars every day in "Disney's *Aladdin – A Musical Spectacular*." In that live musical show, the Genie's miracles include conjuring up a princely procession for Aladdin, complete with horses, camels and elephants, and sending Aladdin and Princess Jasmine aloft on a flying carpet.

DisneyHand is dedicated to making the dreams of families and children a reality through public service initiatives, community outreach and volunteerism in the areas of learning,

compassion, the arts and the environment. The Walt Disney Company, together with its subsidiaries and affiliates, is a diversified, international family entertainment and media enterprise which includes Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, The Walt Disney Studios, ABC, Inc., ESPN, Disney Channel, Disney Stores, television and radio stations and Internet web sites. For more information on Disney's corporate public service efforts, please visit our Web site at www.disneyhand.com.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy. It is the largest wish-granting charity in the world, with 77 chapters in the United States and its territories and 27 international affiliates on five continents. With the help of generous donors and more than 25,000 volunteers, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted more than 97,000 wishes to children around the world since 1980. For more information about the Make-A-Wish Foundation, visit www.wish.org.

#

Contacts: Michelle Bergman
The Walt Disney Company
818-560-8231
michelle.bergman@disney.com

John McClintock
Disneyland Resort
714-781-4836

James R. Maggio
Director of Communications
Make-A-Wish Foundation
602-279-9474 ext. 5311