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NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL PROCEEDS OF \$17.3 MILLION AWARDED TO CHILDREN'S CHARITIES

~Checks Awarded to 24 Southwest Florida Children's Charities; Fund Strategic Initiatives~

NAPLES, Fla. (March 5, 2008) – Trustees of the Naples Children and Education Foundation, founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, today presented checks totaling \$17.3 million to nonprofit organizations focused on children in need. The heads of 24 agencies that serve underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County, Fla., accepted \$6.5 million in grant awards, and several agencies participating in long-term strategic initiatives for area children received \$10.8 million in funding for projects to be completed over the next three years.

The awards set new NCEF records for greatest number of charities funded in a single grant cycle and the largest single-year grant total. NCEF Trustee and 2008 Festival Chair Don Gunther and NCEF Trustee and 2008 Grant Committee Chair John Scot Mueller presented the checks at an awards ceremony at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort.

According to Gunther, distributing festival proceeds is deeply personal for trustees and many festival guests, as well as the children who benefit. "Trustees and guests get to know the names, faces and challenges of many of the children whose lives will be made better by these grants," he said. "The adversity these children face day-in-and-day-out breaks your heart, yet their courage shines through. They are our heroes, and we aspire to be theirs."

"The grant committee and NCEF staff go through a rigorous grant-making process to ensure we're targeting the areas of greatest need and funding organizations best suited to address those needs," said Mueller. "The grants awarded today run the gamut from providing books to needy children, to assisting in the building of a new Boys & Girls Club in Immokalee. Other programs we're funding include early intervention of autism, counseling for abused children and eyeglasses for 500 children."

Organizations awarded NCEF grants for 2008:

Boys & Girls Club of Collier County	\$ 850,000
Boys & Girls Club of Collier County- Immokalee Campus*	\$ 6,500,000
Catholic Charities	\$ 50,000
Child Care of Southwest Florida	\$ 182,000
Children's Hospital of SW Florida	\$ 265,000
Collier County Child Advocacy Council	\$ 450,000
Eden	\$ 150,000
ELLM Program	\$ 246,000
First Book of Collier County	\$ 50,000
Foster Care Council of SWFL	\$ 300,000
FSU/CHSI Isabel Collier Read Medical Campus*	\$ 2,000,000
Fun Time Early Childhood Academy	\$ 100,000
Guadalupe Center of Immokalee	\$ 700,000

Immokalee Child Care Center	\$ 200,000
Immokalee Non Profit Housing	\$ 300,000
Immokalee Early Learning Initiative*	\$ 2,329,065
Marco Island YMCA	\$ 100,000
Naples Equestrian Challenge	\$ 200,000
PACE Center for Girls	\$ 100,000
Redlands Christian Migrant Association	\$ 350,000
Shelter for Abused Women & Children	\$ 250,000
Southwest Florida Workforce Development	\$ 165,000
St. Matthew's House	\$ 55,000
Step by Step-Childhood Education and Therapy Center	\$ 315,000
Tutor Corps	\$ 116,000
Vision Quest	\$ 50,000
YMCA of the Palms	\$ 700,000
Youth Haven	\$ 300,000
<hr/> Total	<hr/> \$ 17,373,065

*Indicates grants made for long-term strategic initiatives

Collier County is among a small number of communities that does not provide local government support for social services. As a result, children's charities must raise funds privately to provide assistance to those in need, and NCEF received scores of grant applications for consideration during this grant cycle. Grant evaluations focused on the following criteria: program cost per child, return on investment, financial health and leadership of the organization, effective and efficient spending of previous NCEF grants, program sustainability and community impact.

In addition to the yearly grant cycle, a portion of festival proceeds are held in reserve for capital-intensive, long-term strategic initiatives that are aimed at closing severe gaps in early learning, medical/oral health, out of school programs and social welfare. In December, NCEF announced three new strategic initiatives aimed at Immokalee's neediest children. Those initiatives consist of expansion of the Boys and Girls Club program; development of an in-home early learning network; and support for a first-class pediatric and maternal/infant health clinic. Grant checks to fund those initiatives were also presented during today's ceremony.

NCEF was founded in 2000 by a group of Naples families dedicated to improving the physical, emotional and educational lives of underprivileged or at-risk children in Collier County. In January, NCEF trustees hosted the eighth annual festival and raised \$14 million for children's charities in four hours. Since its inception in 2001, the festival has raised \$69 million for needy children.

Information about the 2009 Naples Winter Wine Festival, to be held Feb. 6 - 8, and 2009 grant applications are available at napleswinefestival.com or by calling the festival office at 888-837-4919.