

Naples Children & Education Foundation receives 2012 William J. Gies Award

Award recognizes outstanding vision in support of dental education

NAPLES, Fla. (Dec. 20, 2011) – The Naples Children and Education Foundation, the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, has been selected to receive the 2012 William J. Gies Award. According to Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H., president of the ADEAGies Foundation and executive director of the American Dental Education Association, the award recognizes NCEF's "superior demonstration of outstanding vision as public or private partner in support of dental education." The award received by NCEF is one of nine William J. Gies Awards for Vision, Innovation and Achievement, which will be presented in Orlando on March 19 in conjunction with an American Dental Education Association conference.

The Gies Awards, named after dental education pioneer William J. Gies, Ph.D, honor individuals and organizations exemplifying dedication to the highest standards of vision, innovation, and achievement in dental education, research and leadership. "As the health care landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative that the dental education community recognize and support leaders in the oral health field," Valachovic said.

"NCEF trustees are deeply honored to receive this award," said Bob Scott, NCEF chairman. "With the help of the University of Florida College of Dentistry, Edison State College, CHS Healthcare and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, NCEF trustees fulfilled a vision of creating the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center in 2008 to address the pediatric oral health crisis in Collier County." The impetus for the center came from a 2005 needs assessment commissioned by NCEF that revealed an estimated 17,000 children in the county lacked adequate dental care, a proven formula for severe tooth decay, pain and disruption in children's ability to learn. To date, the center has provided care through more than 29,000 patient visits.

"The severity of the dental disease observed at the center, particularly the rampant disease in children under the age of five, is unlike anything the clinicians have ever seen," said Teresa Dolan, D.D.S., M.P.H., professor and Dean at the University of Florida College of Dentistry. "NCEF's commitment to the oral health and well-being of disadvantaged children is unwavering, and the organization is making a significant difference in the lives of these children."

The Naples Children & Education Foundation has raised more than \$94.5 million at the Naples Winter Wine Festival since 2001 to create and expand charitable programs serving underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. As a direct result of the investments of NCEF, more than 125,000 children have had their lives improved. A nine-person board, representing 69 trustees, governs the foundation and currently supports 23 grantees and long-term strategic initiatives focused on children's early learning, medical/oral health, out-of-school programs, behavioral health and childhood hunger.

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is the primary source of funds for NCEF. Wine Spectator magazine has ranked NWWF as the nation's top charity wine auction since 2004. The festival is planned and executed by the trustees, foundation staff and hundreds of volunteers. The 2012 festival will take place Jan. 27 – 29 at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples, a founding sponsor of the festival. For more information, visit www.napleswinefestival.com or call 888-837-4919.

The ADEAGies Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the American Dental Education Association, presents the Gies Awards. For more than 50 years, the ADEAGies Foundation has enhanced the oral health of the public through programs that support dental education, research, leadership and recognition.

Photo captions:

Julieto Paulino Ramirez, Juana Segura.jpg

Julieto Paulino Ramirez lends moral support to her daughter, Juana Segura, during a dental visit to NCEF Pediatric Dental Center. Juana was the center's first patient on opening day, Dec. 3, 2008.

Entire dental building view.jpg

NCEF Pediatric Dental Center at Edison College in East Naples hosts one of the most advanced pediatric dental residency programs in the country.

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