



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Naples Children & Education Foundation and Naples Winter Wine Festival name
Debra Weaver events director**

NAPLES, Fla. (June 15, 2012) – Trustees of Naples Children & Education Foundation, creators of Naples Winter Wine Festival, announce the appointment of Debra Weaver as events director effective June 18. Weaver will be responsible for working with trustees to put on a yearly, world-class wine festival and smaller events, which support NCEF’s mission of making a profound and sustainable difference in the lives of underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. The festival is recognized as the world’s most successful charity wine event and has raised \$107 million for children in need since 2001.

“Debra is a highly skilled events manager and team leader, and we are very pleased to welcome her to our organization,” said Anne Welsh McNulty, NCEF trustee and board chair. “Her attention to detail, ability to multi-task and relationship-management skills are a very good match for the complexities involved in directing a three-day festival with multiple venues and high-profile guests.”

Weaver has more than 30 years experience in hospitality and events management. She served as a meetings and special events manager at The Ritz-Carlton Resorts of Naples for more than eight years. She also served as events director for Searching for Solutions Institute in Naples for two years, where she assisted in planning and coordinating the Imagine Solutions Conference. Prior, she was a restaurant owner/operator in Minnesota for 12 years. She earned a bachelor’s in composite social sciences from Black Hills State University.

In May, NCEF announced the appointment of Maria Jimenez-Lara as grants director. She oversees NCEF’s yearly grants program and long-term strategic initiatives under the direction of NCEF’s board. Both Jimenez-Lara and Weaver report to members of NCEF’s board.

Todd Foege, who has administered the foundation’s grant process in conjunction with the trustee grant committee for six years, and served as acting executive director of NCEF since September 2011, has decided to leave his position. He will continue contributing strategic grant making expertise as an independent consultant to NCEF. There are no plans at this time to recruit an executive director.

NCEF currently supports 24 grantees and provides grants for long-term strategic initiatives focused on children’s early learning, medical/oral health, out-of-school programs, behavioral health and childhood hunger. As a direct result of NCEF investments, more than 150,000 children have had their lives improved since 2001.

Naples Winter Wine Festival, which raised \$12.4 million for children in need at the January festival, is ranked the most successful charity wine auction in the nation since 2004 according to Wine Spectator. The Luxury Institute named it a top 10 event for wealthy Americans. The 2013 festival will be held Jan. 25-27.

For more information about NCEF and the festival, visit www.napleswinefestival.com.

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