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**Naples Children & Education Foundation Appoints Maria Jimenez-Lara as
Chief Executive Officer**

Naples, FL – April 14, 2015 – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, has appointed Maria Jimenez-Lara its new Chief Executive Officer, effective May 1, 2015. Ms. Jimenez-Lara previously served as Director of Foundation Services and Grants Director for NCEF, responsible for overseeing the charitable grant process in conjunction with the trustee-driven Grant Committee.

“Maria is an accomplished and respected leader with a long track record of successfully advocating for the underserved in our community,” said Bob Clifford, Chairman of the Board of NCEF. “After an extensive national search, the Board selected Maria because of her deep knowledge and experience working within our organization, her passion for the issues and her critical insights into ways we can move forward in tackling our community’s problems at their root causes.”

“I couldn’t be more honored to have been chosen to lead the Naples Children & Education Foundation. The work of our organization is critical in our community,” said Maria Jimenez-Lara. “NCEF has worked hard to build strategic partnerships and fund effective organizations that change children’s lives. I look forward to working closely with the Trustees, my co-workers and our extensive network of sponsors, donors, volunteers and supporters to address the very real needs of children in Collier County.”

At NCEF, Ms. Jimenez-Lara developed a strong team and helped the Grant Committee refine the organization’s vision and capacity to strategically impact the children of Collier County. She is known as a leader who develops strong teams, and aligns people, processes and activities to achieve goals.

Prior to joining NCEF in 2012 as Grants Director, Ms. Jimenez-Lara spent two decades leading programs for underserved youth. Most recently, she served as Director of Charter Schools for the Redlands Christian Migrant Association for 13 years, and was able to grow that and other organizations through public and private funding sources, the latter including corporate, individual and foundation donors. Among her accomplishment at RCMA was turning two failing schools into sustainably high-performing

schools. Throughout her career, Ms. Jimenez-Lara has also dedicated her time and expertise to board service, including the Southwest Florida Board of Susan G. Komen, on which she currently serves.

Born in Puerto Rico, Ms. Jimenez-Lara grew up in Miami and moved to Naples in 1999. She earned a B.A. in Psychology at Universidad de las Americas, a B.S. in Management at Florida International University and a Masters in Public Administration from Hodges University.

In arriving at its unanimous choice of Ms. Jimenez-Lara, the Search Committee noted her leadership, administrative, and management skills, as well as her passion for NCEF's mission and her ability to listen to all viewpoints and create consensus. The Committee appreciated Ms. Jimenez-Lara's ideas on advancing NCEF's structure, processes and excellence, including building on the strengths of the staff and Trustees.

The four-month search process, managed by BoardWalk Consulting, attracted 30 qualified national and local candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds, including nonprofit, festival, foundation, hospitality and corporate leadership roles.

About The Naples Children & Education Foundation

The Naples Children & Education Foundation, the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is committed to improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted over 40 of the most effective nonprofits in the community, providing around 200,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. For more information about NCEF, please visit www.napleswinefestival.com.

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