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Energy-Packed Naples Winter Wine Festival Raises More than \$11 Million for Children in Need

Naples, FL – February 1, 2016 – After a spirited weekend featuring the best wines produced worldwide and cuisine from the country's top chefs, the Naples Winter Wine Festival generated \$11.1 million during its thrilling live auction, bringing the total amount raised since the Festival's inception in 2001 to more than \$146 million.

Guests from around world came together under the tent to bid on 64 live auction lots, including exclusive wine and travel experiences, dazzling art pieces, and limited-edition cars. These items were donated in support of the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the Naples Winter Wine Festival's founding organization, which has delivered grants to more than 40 non-profit organizations in its 16 year history, benefitting more than 200,000 local children.

"We are thrilled and touched by the generosity and energy at this year's auction," said Sandi Moran, co-chair of the 2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival. "It's truly amazing to see so many people work together to realize the goal that is at the core of every Festival: making a lasting difference for the children of our local community."

The live auction's top single bid of **\$750,000** went to a bespoke 2016 Rolls-Royce Dawn, designed uniquely for the Festival, making the winning bidder the first person in the world to receive this coveted vehicle.

Additional highlights from the live auction:

- Three separate bidders won VIP access to Napa Valley's BottleRock music festival, two bespoke guitars and three double magnums of coveted Gargiulo wines, totaling **\$720,000**.
- **\$650,000** was the winning bid for a customized Ferrari 488 Spider with exclusive racing experiences.
- **\$400,000** was raised to attend a private cooking class with Glenn Close, taught by celebrity chef Mario Batali.
- A collection of Staglin Family Vineyard's rare wines plus 10 days in Chile and Argentina with the vintners themselves and VIP tastings throughout the trip drew a final bid of **\$350,000**.

2016's Fund-a-Need initiative raised a total of \$615,000 from dozens of generous attendees, all of which goes toward [NCEF's Early Learning Initiative](#), which connects high-quality early childhood care providers to bring more early learning opportunities to the Naples community.

The weekend kicked off with a 40th anniversary wine tasting to commemorate the historic Judgment of Paris that catapulted California wines to lasting international fame. Steven Spurrier, host of the original event, joined George Taber, author of the best-selling book about the competition, along with proprietors Bo Barrett of Chateau Montelena and Ted Baseler of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, to give guests an exclusive taste of these American wineries that were honored in the original competition.

Throughout the rest of the weekend, guests were treated to culinary artistry from more than 20 of the country's top chefs, including stars such as Curtis Duffy, Bill Telepan, and Richard Reddington, as well as Chef de Cuisine Rick Tramonto, proprietor of renowned restaurants in both Chicago and New Orleans. 17 Master Sommeliers—more than ever before—poured wines at the Festival, sharing their skill and knowledge with hundreds of lucky guests. Over 40 acclaimed vintners from across the globe also attended the event, led by Paul and Emily Michael of the Peter Michael Winery, whose role as this year's Honored Vintners reflects their remarkable commitment to the Festival and quality of their wines.

"The chefs, sommeliers, and vintners are crucial to making this Festival a success," added Laura Dixon, co-chair of the 2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival. "Their contributions of time and talent help us make a positive impact on thousands of lives in the community."

Using the funds raised from this year's auction, NCEF will award grants to local organizations serving Collier County children in need on March 14.

About the Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is the most successful international charity wine auction in the world, bringing together renowned vintners and chefs with wine enthusiasts and philanthropists for a three-day Festival that raises millions of dollars for underprivileged and at-risk children. Every dollar raised under the tent funds the Festival's founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), whose annual grants and strategic initiatives have provided more than 200,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. For more information, please visit Napleswinefestival.com.

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