



For Immediate Release

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Friends of Foster Children Forever Hosts 2nd Annual Circle of Friends Luncheon

(November 5, 2015 – Naples, FL) The Friends of Foster Children Forever (FFCF) held their 2nd annual *Circle of Friends* luncheon on Thursday November 5, 2015 at Bay Colony Golf Club to honor the extraordinary contributions and work of the Honorable Franklin Baker and Robert Germain Jr.

Doug Campbell, FFCF Board of Directors Chair, welcomed guests to the special luncheon to honor two men who have been instrumental in helping improve the lives of at-risk children and the work of FFCF. Jane Billings, Executive Director, added that not only did FFCF want to pay tribute to these two outstanding individuals, but also wanted to thank the generous supporters and welcome new friends to the circle as the organization moves forward with its vital work.

To better understand the importance of the FFCF tutoring program, Christa Crehan Principal of Lely Elementary School and Jinx Liggett, Executive Director of Youth Haven, discussed the positive impact of academic mentoring in the lives of at-risk children.

Special guest speaker Jeff Lytle, former editorial editor for the Naples Daily News, paid tribute to the Honorable Franklin Baker with the *Friend of Distinction Award* for a history of innovation and service on behalf of at risk youth in the Twentieth Judicial Court. John Cardillo and Rich Montecalvo presented the award to Judge Baker after sharing their personal stories and admiration for a man who has constantly sought to create opportunities to help juvenile offenders turn their lives around, and who has been a strong advocate for children's rights throughout his career.

Dawn Montecalvo, first executive director of FFCF (formally known as Foster Care Council of SWFL), paid tribute to Robert Germain Jr. who was the recipient of the *Friend for a Lifetime* award. Germain has sponsored the annual *Gift of Giving* event for the past 16 years, an event where children can shop for family members and themselves. Among Germain's many charitable efforts aimed at helping children, he and his daughter Nicole, sponsor the annual shopping opportunity for foster children and pledges to continue as long as there are children in need. Monica and Yesenia Aviles, who have taken part in past *Gift of Giving* events, presented the award.

"Because of the communities' efforts and contributions, thousands of foster children have had the opportunity to discover hidden talents, boost their self-esteem, sustain good academic grades and most importantly, begin to uncover their individual potential," says Jane Billings, Executive Director of FFCF.

The Circle of Friends luncheon was underwritten by the generosity and vision of Susan K. Erb and Lance B. McMurry, Wealth Management Advisors for Merrill Lynch and the Miami, Naples & Islands Complex.

The mission of Friends of Foster Children Forever (FFCF) is to focus on the children they serve by providing targeted educational and enrichment opportunities that allow each child to fulfill his or her potential. FFCF, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, works to fulfill the unmet needs of every child who enters, or is at risk of entering the foster care system in Southwest Florida. FFCF will follow the child wherever they are placed. For more information about Friends of Foster Children of Forever (FFCF) or how to help, visit www.friendsoffosterchildren.net or call (239) 262-1808.

