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Editor's Note: Images attached; cutlines listed below

**ChildNet Hosts Annual Care for Kids Luncheon
Benefitting Children in Foster Care
*Philanthropist Lorraine Thomas receives Champion for Children Award***

BROWARD COUNTY (August 10, 2015) – ChildNet, the Community-Based Care lead agency in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, recently hosted its inaugural Care for Kids Luncheon, raising over \$60,000 for children in the local child welfare system. Presented by premier law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, Broward's local business, government and community leaders gathered at the Hyatt Pier Sixty-Six to raise funds and awareness for the community's abused, abandoned and neglected children. Lorraine Thomas, widow of Dave Thomas (founder of Wendy's restaurants), was also honored for her longtime dedication to children in foster care.

As the provider of basic needs for the community's most vulnerable children, ChildNet organized the luncheon to supplement the essentials these need and to acknowledge the support of community partners, service providers, legislators, foster parents and all who help them directly support the activities and items needed by the more than 3,000 children in Broward's welfare system.

"Through no fault of their own, an increasing number of children enter the foster care system every year. This year, ChildNet and our partner agencies are serving 650 more children. It is vital that we not only provide each and every child in our care with a safe environment, but that we also give them the opportunity to enjoy activities like any other kid," said Emilio Benitez, CEO and President of ChildNet. "We are grateful to our amazing group of sponsors and attendees that allow us to say 'yes' to many foster children who want to attend field trips, go to summer camp, play in the band, join a sports team or take a dance lesson. These opportunities create lasting memories for the children in our care."

Those who spoke at the event also included Eric Yutzy, Local 10 News anchor, who was adopted; Sigrid McCawley, Vice Chair of the ChildNet Board of Directors from presenting sponsor Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP; Lorraine Thomas, philanthropist, honoree and recipient of the Champion for Children Award; and Gabriella Stroup, adopted child and Miss Miami-Dade's Outstanding Teen of 2015.

Thomas was recognized at the luncheon for her avid support of the adoption of children in care. A resident of Broward County for more than 30 years, she and her late husband Dave Thomas established the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to increase adoptions of children in the foster care system. Since the inception of a grant with ChildNet in 2012, 19 children in Broward County have been adopted through the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program. The program also supports a staff position targeted exclusively on moving the longest-waiting children from foster care into adoptive families.

“It has been wonderful to work alongside ChildNet in helping all the children in foster care in Broward County find a loving, permanent home,” said Thomas. “There are so many kids out there still waiting to be adopted. That is how we know we have to keep pushing forward.”

Stroup also had the opportunity to speak and perform during the luncheon. A young performance artist and community activist, she was adopted with her brother through the dependency system. Her parents were largely inspired to adopt after reading Dave Thomas’ obituary and learning all he had done for children in foster care.

“The kids that are taken into the foster care system are there for a reason. No child deserves to be left abused, abandoned or neglected,” said Stroup. “All children deserve a loving and safe environment to call home, and I am grateful to all those who find it in their hearts to help kids not unlike myself find a place to call home. They are my heroes.”

In addition to Boies, Schiller & Flexner, other sponsors included I. Lorraine Thomas; JM Family Enterprises Inc.; Marsh & McLennan Agency; BB&T; Dex Imaging; Greenberg Traurig; Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital at Memorial; Stiles; Tripp Scott, Attorneys at Law; Baptist Health South Florida; Cherry Bekaert; Chris Evert Children’s Hospital; Florida Community Bank; Gray-Robinson Attorney at Law; Sunshine Health; Law Offices of Jeffrey C. Dwyer P,A.; Humana; and Emilio Benitez.

As the single private non-profit entity responsible for administration of the local child welfare system, ChildNet brings years of dedication to protecting abused, abandoned and neglected children in the communities it serves.

For more information about ChildNet Broward County, please call (954) 414-6000. Visit www.ChildNet.us and www.facebook.com/ChildNet.

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Cutlines

Photo 1 (L to R): Jeffrey Dwyer, ChildNet; Eric Yutzy, WPLG Local 10; Lorraine Thomas, honoree; Sigrid McCawley, Boies Sciller & Flexner LLP; Catalina Avalos, Tripp Scott P.A.

Photo 3 (L to R): Wendy Smith, ChildNet; Monica King, ChildNet; Kerry Burrett; Tomar Riley

Photo 4 (L to R): Connie Diaz; Erin Clampett; Steve Light; Michelle Glen

Photo 5 (L to R): Jane Johnson and Miss Miami Dade Outstanding Teen 2015 Gabrielle Stroup

Photo 6 (L to R): Diana Gomez; Nadine Klein; Mandy Moldehnke; Lytisha Anderson; Carla De Divitiis

Photo 7 (L to R): Dawn Quaranta; Scott Singer; Jackie Degroat; Sandy Harris

Photo 8 (L to R): Eric Gabrielle; Derrick Roberts, ChildNet

Photo 9 (L to R): Nanci Campbell, BB&T; Cheryl Huey, BB&T

Photo 10 (L to R): Nicole Anderson; Frederick Anderson

Photo 11 (L to R): Paul Smith; Toby Pina Cenpatico

Photo 12 (L to R): Julie Schneider; Ryan Coote