

For Immediate Release

MEDIA CONTACT

Beatriz Bellorin
BBellorin@BeAVoice.org
(786) 469-3865

Voices For Children hosts its 24th Annual 'Be A Voice Luncheon'

MIAMI – October 22, 2018 – [Voices For Children Foundation](#), a Miami non-profit organization advocating for children in foster care, along with presenting sponsor Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson P.A., served as hosts to approximately 350 attorneys, judges, elected officials, community leaders, volunteers and supporters at the 24th Annual "Be A Voice Luncheon" held on **Friday, October 19, at Jungle Island, 111 Parrot Jungle Trail Miami, FL 33132**. Local 10 News anchor Louis Aguirre served as the emcee.

With help from supporters, Voices For Children Foundation raised \$120,000. The money will help ensure that abused, abandoned and neglected children in Miami-Dade County have a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem and that resources are available to support their health, educational and social needs.

During the event, Voices For Children continued to educate and raise awareness about child abuse, foster care, the importance of the Guardian ad Litem program, and working together with different organizations to improve the lives of children in the dependency system. Ruth Ramirez, a talented child advocate that holds a BA and MBA from FIU and is now KIPP's Miami Development Director, gave a heartwarming testimonial about her experience in the foster care system and shared how she has been able to succeed thanks to perseverance, focus on education, love and faith. Ruth Ramirez was also awarded with the Pathfinder Award. The honor acknowledges former foster youth that have overcome adversity and have succeeded in reaching their goals. "It might seem strange that I look at my past and do not wish for a different one. There were dark times, distress, and sorrow. But I would not trade any of it. It has afforded me a unique perspective and has directed my work in advocacy" said Ruth.

A touching moment came when Robert Lederman, husband of Judge Cindy Lederman came to the podium to present the Most Valuable Protector Award to his wife. In his speech he honored her exemplary commitment to abused, abandoned and neglected children for over twenty-five years on the bench. He also recognized her part in the transformation of Miami's dependency system. During her acceptance speech Judge Lederman acknowledged her colleagues in the room and celebrated the work of Voices For Children and the Guardian ad Litem Program, noting the significance of the support each provides to children in foster care.

In addition to Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A. which has sponsored the Annual Be A Voice Luncheon for twelve consecutive years, the event was made possible by Gold Guardian sponsors including: Miami-Dade County Commissioners: Audrey M. Edmonson, Jose "Pepe" Diaz, and Sally A. Heyman and Silver Guardian Sponsors: Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Berkowitz, Brown & Brown Insurance and Cigna Healthcare, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Robins, Miami-Dade County Commissioners: Daniella Levine Cava and Dennis C. Moss. Brickell Magazine, Selecta and Wheathy Magazine were the event's media sponsors.

About Voices For Children Foundation

Voices For Children Foundation is a non-profit organization that raises money to help ensure that abused, abandoned, and neglected children in Miami-Dade County each have a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem and that financial assistance and other resources are available for their health, educational, and social needs. Guardians ad Litem are trained, court-appointed adults who serve as their representative voices in dependency court proceedings. Currently, almost 2,300 children are in Miami-Dade County's Foster Care system, and 9% of the children are unrepresented by Guardians ad Litem. For more information, please visit www.BeAVoice.org.