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**VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDATION CELEBRATES CHILD ADVOCATES AT  
13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HALLOWEEN LUNCHEON**

October 24, 2007-Miami, FL- Voices For Children Foundation, the fundraising arm of the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Guardian Ad Litem Program, announced its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Halloween Luncheon was an extraordinary success, raising nearly \$140,000 to benefit the abused, abandoned, and neglected children in Miami Dade County. Presented by Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A., the traditional Luncheon celebrated our community's child advocates at Jungle Island.

Nearly 400 guests gathered on Friday, October 12 to celebrate Voices For Children's Most Valuable Protectors: members of the community who have distinguished themselves by their strong support and commitment to the work of the organization on behalf of the abused and neglected children of Miami-Dade County. The treetop ballroom at Jungle Island, especially decorated for the occasion with Halloween motifs and centerpieces prepared by 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Art students at Ojus Elementary School, was the venue for this annual event Co-Chaired by Abigail Price-Williams, Esq. and Andrea Steinacker.

During the Luncheon, Voices For Children's Chief Executive Officer, Nestor Rodriguez, warmly thanked this year's Presenting Sponsor, Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A., for their extraordinary commitment to making a difference in the lives of the abused, abandoned, and neglected children. "Stearns Weaver Miller is proud to support Voices For Children and applauds the critical role it plays in our community to protect the most vulnerable and the most valuable: our children, our future," were the words from the firm's Managing Director, Richard E. Schatz.

Judge David Young, from the syndicated courtroom series, Judge David Young, served as this year's Emcee. His fresh and dynamic personality entertained guests during the award ceremony, which also included an emotional testimonial from a former foster child, now a wife and mother of two working for a community-based organization committed to the well-being of at-risk children, and her former Guardian Ad Litem volunteer, now Chairman of Voices For Children's Foundation, Yolanda Berkowitz.

The recipients of Voices For Children 2007 MVPs are:

●**Advocate Award: Dave Barry**

As an author of more than 30 books, including five children's books, a Hollywood movie, as inspiration for the sitcom Dave's World, and as a Pulitzer Prize winner for commentary, Dave Barry brings light and laughter into the lives of every day men and women. Through his involvement with Voices, he has engaged and entertained hundreds of our supporters and friends, and helped Voices raise nearly half a million dollars from different events he was instrumental in organizing.

●**Philanthropy Award: Pavarini Construction Company**

Pavarini has been a long term supporter and key sponsor of Voices For Children's Gala since the year 2000. As one of the top Gala donors, Pavarini has been a role model for other construction companies and developers in Miami.

●**Leadership Award: Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners**

The Board of County Commissioners has provided continuous financial support to Voices For Children Foundation, enabling the organization to support the Guardian Ad Litem Program's mission and supporting the needs of the children served.

**(more)**

## Voices For Children recognizes MVPs (page 2)-

- Voices For Children Award: The Miami Herald Media Company

The Miami Herald Media Company is a long-time supporter of Voices For Children, including critical support of projects such as the Annual Toy Drive for over ten years and “Picturing Ourselves,” a photo exhibit that The Miami Herald hosted in their lobby in April 2003. Since that time, The Miami Herald Media Company has also supported other Voices For Children events, such as: A Festival of Voices, Be A Voice Gala, and Art Box.

- The Phillip Hamersmith Award: Laurie Jennings.

Laurie Jennings first got to know the organization’s work five years ago. She is now a permanent fixture as the mistress of ceremonies at Voices’ annual Gala. Laurie is very familiar with various agencies serving children in need across our community. But she says Voices really stands out. She has been to court, watched the Guardians at work, and understands the importance of being a voice.

The mission of Voices For Children Foundation is to raise funds to ensure that every abused, abandoned, and neglected child in Miami-Dade County has a court appointed Guardian Ad Litem to represent their best interests in court and that financial assistance and other resources are available to meet their needs. There are over 4,000 children in court proceedings who need representation, with the Guardian Ad Litem advocating for nearly 72% of them at any given time. Be a Voice, visit [www.voices4.org](http://www.voices4.org).

Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A. is a full service law firm with offices in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Tampa. Over 115 attorneys counsel clients in all areas of commercial law throughout Florida and nationwide. We are privileged to serve a loyal client base that ranges from small businesses and entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 companies and major financial institutions. We understand the impact of the law on business and provide highly skilled navigation of the regulatory environment. A well-honed culture of flexibility and progressive administration allows us to remain nimble, maximize results, and expedite success. We are proud to operate on a world-class level while serving our clients with impeccable care.

While we are proud of the landmark legal victories achieved for our clients, we are equally proud of our *pro bono* efforts on behalf of those unable to afford counsel. We are also dedicated to community-based charitable organizations and provide regular contributions of time and financial resources to those in need.

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With the support of Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A; Mayor Carlos Alvarez; Honorable Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan -District 1; Honorable Commissioner Dorrin D. Rolle - District 2; Honorable Commissioner Audrey Edmonson- District 3; Honorable Commissioner Sally A. Heyman -District 4; Honorable Chair Bruno A. Barreiro - District 5; Honorable Commissioner Rebeca Sosa - District 6 ; Honorable Commissioner Carlos A. Gimenez -District 7; Honorable Commissioner Katy Sorenson - District 8; Honorable Commissioner Dennis C. Moss -District 9; Honorable Commissioner Javier D. Souto - District 10; Honorable Commissioner Joe A. Martinez - District 11; Honorable Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz - District 12; Honorable Commissioner Natacha Seijas - District 13; and Yolanda and Jeff Berkowitz.