



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY RE-ENERGIZED FOR NEW YEAR DURING
THE SIXTH ANNUAL WEDU BE MORE AWARDS™**
Winners Announced for the “Academy Awards® for Nonprofits”

Tampa, FL – Last year almost everyone faced economic challenges – and particularly those nonprofit organizations that serve the community’s most needy or contribute to the cultural spirit of its citizens. But today, great stories, unscripted moments, inspirational messages and nail-biting anticipation were at the heart of a celebration that has become known as the Academy Awards for Nonprofits. WEDU, west central Florida’s leading PBS station and public media source, recognized more than more than 75 nonprofit organizations, and countless individuals, who applied for honors and recognition in the sixth annual **WEDU Be More Awards™** held at the A La Carte Event Pavilion in Tampa.

Hosted by WEDU, the WEDU Be More Awards™ luncheon is one of the station’s premier events and paid tribute to outstanding achievements made by dedicated and generous individuals, as well as nonprofit organizations, for 2010. For the third consecutive year, Tampa Bay’s own **Jack Harris**, legendary media personality and co-host the WFLA radio morning show, served as a **WEDU Be More Awards™** Master of Ceremonies. Joining Mr. Harris as co-host this year was **Lisette Campos**, award-winning journalist, Director of Community Affairs for ABC Action News and host of the *Positively Tampa Bay* segment seen weekdays on ABC in the Tampa area. Together, Mr. Harris and Ms. Campo led event a sold-out crowd of more than 500 guests through an afternoon filled with heartfelt stories and encouraging messages. **Santiago Corrada** from the City of Tampa also joined the celebration and presented the Mayor’s proclamation recognizing January 13th as WEDU Be More Awards™ Day; this is the sixth annual Be More Awards Day proclamation made by the City. These special guests, along with honorary event chairman, philanthropist and NFL Veteran **Ryan Nece**, applauded heroic and valiant efforts made every day by the nonprofit community, and the outstanding achievements winners made by individual volunteers, philanthropists, entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations in the following 13 categories:

- more -

Application Categories:

Be More...Informed

Marketing Campaign Award ~ Broadening horizons through creative and results-driven original marketing campaigns using multimedia platforms is the basis of this award. Through the use of broadcast, print, social media and/or community awareness campaigns, the organization demonstrated direct impact to established goals.

WINNER: More Health, Inc.

Finalists:

DACCO

Morean Arts Center

ShelterBox

The Spring of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Be More...Entertaining

Special Events Award ~ Special events can achieve a multitude of goals and the organization that demonstrates the most successful – based on measurable objectives – took home this honor. This could be a related series of events, or one particularly original special event or fundraiser to recognize, salute, assist, celebrate people or businesses, brand the organization and/or build/strengthen relationships with supporters.

WINNER: Child Abuse Council

Finalists:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc.

The Cinderella Project;

The Pier Aquarium

Wheels of Success

Be More...Brilliant

Innovation Award ~ Originality is the single most important ingredient in this category. The organization that developed an original idea and displays/delivers it in a uniquely creative way as a means to achieve organizational goals was recognized.

WINNER: Florida Institute for Community Studies, Inc.

Finalists:

Gulf Coast Dental Outreach

More Health, Inc.

Operation Helping Hand

Wheels of Success

Be More...Enriched

Arts & Culture Award ~ Culturally-based organizations contribute to the spirit of adventure and exploration through education in the arts, and bring rich and engaging experiences to audiences who might not otherwise have opportunities to witness or be an active participant. This award recognized outstanding achievement specifically for programs related to the arts, performance, historic or zoological exhibits.

WINNER: Powerstories Theatre, Inc.

Finalists:

Carrollwood Cultural Center

David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts

Lake Wales Arts Council

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

Be More...Knowledgeable

Educational Outreach ~ Nonprofit organizations strive every day to educate their audience about their mission/services or a particular endeavor. This award was bestowed upon the one organization that, through a specific project, offered guidance, knowledge, emotional or physical support, and/or a mentorship program aimed at improving specific aspects of community life and introducing and/or conducting programs to enrich and empower the community.

WINNER: Infants & Young Children of WCF, Inc.

Finalists:

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota County

Community Tampa Bay

Metropolitan Charities, Inc. (dba Metro Wellness & Community Centers)

The Pier Aquarium

Online Categories:

Be More...Humble

The People's Choice Award ~ This award was driven by an online poll with more than 25,000 [unique] votes from the general public in the WEDU viewing area. The poll automatically included a listing of *all* organizations that *submitted an application*, regardless of category. This prestigious award exhibits the connection and relationship the organization has with the community and the people it serves. It allows area citizens to honor the nonprofit that they feel most exemplifies the spirit of the community.

WINNER: Child Abuse Council

Finalists:

BPOE – Elks

Early Learning Coalition of Pasco & Hernando Counties, Inc.

Metropolitan Charities, Inc. (dba Metro Wellness & Community Centers)

Tampa Preparatory School

Be More...Relevant

NEW AWARD

Best Use of Video ~ A short video that will, or has, compelled someone to seek services; volunteer their time or support an organization financially.

WINNER: Big Cat Rescue

Finalists:

Children First, Inc.

Lazydays Employee Foundation

MacDonald Training Center

The Spring of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Be More...Involved

The Mason Dixon Be More Involved - Award for Volunteerism ~ One person can make an extraordinary difference and these award finalists were culled from an online poll driven by votes from the general public in the WEDU viewing area. Mason Dixon, community philanthropist and Q105 radio personality, ultimately chose and presented the award to the most-deserving recipient - from the five finalists - that received the most online support.

WINNER: Robert Ettleman

Finalists:

Evi Green

Shannon Greene

Jeraldine Williams Shaw

Jeanne Stephenson

Be More...Entrepreneurial

NEW AWARD

Rising Star Award ~ The nonprofit community is in need of leaders and this award was presented to an individual, under the age of 30, who has distinguished themselves by using entrepreneurial skills to build a successful endeavor [in the nonprofit arena] that can be directly accredited to their inspiration, motivation and business acumen.

Winner: Steve Toth (Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at USF)

Finalists:

Zachary Bonner (Little Red Wagon Foundation)

Benjamin J. Carpenter (Bens Mends / Bens Mends Hearts)

Alice Darrow (Frou Frou Flip Flops)

T. Hampton Dohrman (Hampton Arts Management, Artists and Writers Group)

Media Research Categories:

Be More...Giving

NEW AWARD

The Ryan Nece Foundation Power of Giving Award ~ NFL Veteran, WEDU Board Member and Founder of the Ryan Nece Foundation, Ryan Nece delivered a compelling and inspiring keynote address at the 2010 Be More Awards ceremony on *be-ing more* and The Power of Giving. His message resonated throughout the community which led to the creation of this award. This honor was bestowed upon the organization / individual/family who by the use of a simple altruistic gesture of time, talent or treasure, made a tremendous impact in someone's life. Judges determined five finalists based on newsgathering with media partner ABC Action News; Mr. Nece decided the ultimate winner of his namesake award.

WINNER: Bryane Heaberlin

Finalists:

BBQ Trio: Pete Cross; Randy Skinner; Ricky Shirah

Betty Perry

Bill Palmer

John Redd, DMD

Be More...Philanthropic

NEW AWARD

Individual or Corporate Award ~ Based on published recognition of significant financial support given to one or more nonprofit organizations by an individual/family or corporate citizen, this award honors the contribution(s) made within the judging period that most exemplified the spirit of *be more*. This philanthropic honoree's support should help local citizens expand their horizons; explore new ideas and new worlds.

WINNER: David A. Straz, Jr. (David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts)

Finalists:

Outback Steakhouse (Operation Homefront)

Hinks and Elaine Shimberg (St. Joseph's Hospitals Foundation)

Jay B. and Marsha Starkey (Morton Plant Hospital Foundation; Florida Orchestra)

Donald Tapia (Saint Leo University)

Judges Categories:

Be More...Encouraged

Judge's Choice Award ~ The Judge's Choice Award is given to an organization demonstrating an overall appeal due to its original and extraordinary approach to its respective endeavor and/or providing an independent voice for those less heard. Not necessarily driven by an organization's measurable results, this award is decided entirely by the WEDU Be More Award™ judges based on majority vote and consensus. **(A TIE in this category resulted in six finalists)**

WINNER: Children First, Inc.

Finalists:

Lake Wales Arts Council

Little Red Wagon Foundation

More Health, Inc.

Operation Helping Hand, Inc.

Wheels of Success

Be More...Unstoppable ~ Nonprofit Organization of the Year

Nonprofit Organization of the Year ~ This award is the most coveted and is determined through extensive research. It is ultimately decided by an independent judging committee and given to one organization that, through a superior level of service, helps their constituency *be more*. Selected from all submitted applications, the criteria to win this award consists of overall organizational excellence; fulfillment of the *Four Commitments to the Community*, including service to the organizations' constituency, level of community impact, financial viability and embodiment of overall community goodwill. In addition to many other benefits, the organization recognized with this award received a \$1,000 WEDU Community Investment Grant.

WINNER: Housing & Education Alliance

Finalists:

Infants & Young Children of WCF, Inc.

More Health, Inc.

The Spring of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Wheels of Success

Highlights from 2011 ceremony and interviews with the WEDU Be More Award winners, will be featured during the **WEDU Be More Awards™ *Be More Inspired: Behind the Scenes at the 2011 Be More Awards*** primetime television special premiering on **WEDU Thursday, February 24th at 9 pm.**

Created by WEDU, the WEDU Be More Awards™ has become a nationally-recognized, award-winning program and special initiative of PBS stations throughout the country who can best tell local success stories of their unsung heroes, generate awareness for nonprofit organizations and celebrate the spirit of goodwill throughout their own communities. There is no charge for a nonprofit organization to apply for recognition, and the exposure provided by the PBS station throughout the program offers substantial credibility and promotion of an organizations' mission. Additionally, the Be More Awards program serves as a fundraising and community partnership event for each PBS station, also a deserving nonprofit organization in their individual community.

The 2011 ceremony, celebrating outstanding achievements by individuals and nonprofit organizations in west central Florida, was also a fundraising event for WEDU. The event was supported in part by The Bank of Tampa, Verizon Foundation, St. Petersburg Times, A La Carte Event Pavilion, AVSS, Par, conceptBait, Tampa Bay Parenting Magazine, Humana, American Marketing and Mailing Services and Positive Impact Magazine.

An extension of the award-winning, nationally-recognized WEDU Be More Awards™ program, the **WEDU Be More Effective Workshop** also took place on January 13th at the A La Carte Pavilion. From 8:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. more than 100 workshop attendees participated a meaningful day of continued education in areas that will help nonprofit leaders be more effective within their organizations and serving their constituents. In addition to the informative workshop sessions, attendees had the opportunity to network with peers and learn more about services provided by local businesses participating in the workshop's Resource Marketplace.

WEDU partners with many cultural and educational institutions in west central Florida to bring the arts, education and culture to its television audiences and members, and enrich and inspire the community it serves. For more information about the WEDU Be More Awards™ and other special events, television programming, outreach efforts and community partnerships visit wedu.org. WEDU, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the area's leading PBS station and public media source, licensed to Tampa and St. Petersburg and reaching 16 counties through multiple media platforms including on-air broadcasting and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Through non-commercial content people from every walk-of-life are invited to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; hear diverse viewpoints; and take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. WEDU is financially supported by its local community, and consistently provides the highest quality education, information, and entertainment programming, special events and outreach activities for the west central Florida community and beyond. For more information about WEDU, the Be More Awards, programming or support please visit wedu.org or call 813.254.9338.



To obtain more information about each of the 2010 WEDU Be More Awards winners, please contact Laura Fage at lfage@wedu.org or 813.739.2940.