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The Florida Center for Early Childhood Presents the Inaugural “Wonder Gala”

Friday, December 6, at The Ora

The fundraising event will feature compelling narratives from families whose lives have been transformed by The Florida Center, offering a glimpse into the powerful impact of its programs.

(October 21, 2024) The Florida Center for Early Childhood announces its inaugural “Wonder Gala,” a newly reimagined fundraiser poised to make an even greater impact than its predecessor, the Winter Gala. The event will take place December 6, 6:30 p.m., at The Ora, 578 McIntosh Road, Sarasota. Individual tickets are \$375, and a variety of sponsorship opportunities are still available. ***To learn more or to purchase tickets, visit TheFloridaCenter.org or call 941-371-8820.***

The Wonder Gala’s main event will feature heartfelt narratives from families whose lives have been transformed by The Florida Center, offering a glimpse into the powerful impact of its programs. A captivating “Wonder Wall” will also be on display, showcasing the faces and stories of children and families whose futures have been shaped by the center’s support. This visual journey will highlight not just the challenges these families have overcome, but also the strength, resilience, and hope that emerged

as a result of the community's generosity and The Florida Center's commitment to fostering brighter tomorrows.

Guests will enjoy a sparkling night of festivities, beginning with a special VIP pre-party. The event will also showcase a powerful performance by captivating rising vocalist Allison Nash, followed by dancing to the high-energy sounds of Soul Sensations. Guests can indulge in an open bar and a gourmet feast prepared by Michael's On East, while silent and live auctions offer the chance to bid on one-of-a-kind items. All proceeds will directly support The Florida Center's critical programs that provide early education, developmental therapies, mental health services, and more to local children and their families.

According to Dr. Kristie Skoglund, CEO of the Florida Center, the gala will provide a unique opportunity for guests to connect with others who share their passion for the center's mission and to witness the profound impact of its life-changing work.

"We are thrilled to introduce the Wonder Gala, which reflects not only the magic of the season but also the remarkable progress made by the children and families we serve," said Dr. Skoglund.

"This event has evolved to better engage our community and provide new ways for supporters to become a part of our journey toward creating brighter futures. We look forward to sharing the stories of triumph and hope that inspire us all."

Photo captions:

- *Susan Del Gallo, an occupational and language therapist, works with a child at The Florida Center's North Port campus.*

- *Linda Tobiassen, M.A., LMHC, an early childhood mental health consultant, works with a student at The Florida Center's Sarasota campus.*
- *Students and their teacher at The Florida Center's Starfish Academy in Sarasota.*
- *A pre-kindergarten student holds up a thank you heart at The Florida Center's Starfish Academy in Sarasota.*

About The Florida Center for Early Childhood

For more than 40 years, The Florida Center for Early Childhood has been the leading provider of therapeutic services, early education, and healthy development for young children in southwest Florida, offering a seamless delivery of services for the whole child and their family. Today, the agency is nationally recognized for its early childhood expertise in various specialties. The Florida Center provides developmental therapies, mental health counseling, the Starfish Academy preschool, the Healthy Families home-visiting program, and the state's only Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Clinic, with locations in Sarasota and Orlando. **For more information, visit TheFloridaCenter.org.**