



Children First Parent Awarded the Florida Head Start Association Beating the Odds Award

For Immediate Release

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TALLAHASSEE, FL – September 5, 2023 – Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) proudly announces that it has named Leah Jones, a parent from the Children First Head Start/Early Head Start program, this year's recipient of the Beating the Odds award.

This award is presented to a Head Start/Early Head Start parent who has overcome significant challenges and is on a journey to self-sufficiency, and that's precisely what this year's recipient is doing. Ms. Jones is battling a lifelong medical illness which has presented her with many challenges including securing a job, finding transportation and housing, and becoming financially stable. She secured a career that allowed her the flexibility to work remotely to protect her health, save enough money to find stable housing for her and her daughter, and rely on a support system that can offer transportation.

Ms. Jones has served on the Children First Policy Council for two years and was elected by her peers as Parliamentarian for the Executive Council during the 2022-2023 school year. Through all of her trials and tribulations, she has managed to volunteer 50 hours at Children First which shows her tenacity and courage to continue her journey to self-sufficiency.

Kathleen Sullivan, Vice President of Programs and Head Start/Early Head Start Director at Children First, said, "Leah has preserved and demonstrated extreme diligence and finds the balance between what her health allows her to do and what her eager mind wants to do. Stepping back and giving up is not part of her vocabulary."

The Head Start Grantee Recipient selects nominees and is evaluated by a panel of peers and chosen by the FHSA awards committee. Recipients will be honored during the FHSA annual awards luncheon at the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village in Cape Coral, Florida, on October 27. Complete details are available on our website, www.FLHeadStart.org.

About FHSA

The Florida Head Start Association is a nonprofit organization working on behalf of the 42,014 children and families in Florida. Head Start is an innovative federal-to-local program delivering services from school readiness, comprehensive health, and family support services. The Head Start Program Performance Standards drive programs to strengthen and improve the quality to ensure that all children start school ready to succeed. FHSA has been the voice for Florida's most vulnerable children and families since 1999 and is committed to enhancing and supporting the capability of local Head Start programs in the delivery of high-quality services for our children and families.

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