



STATE ASSOCIATION HONOREES RECOGNIZED BY THE NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Wanda Minick, Executive Director

(850) 694-6477

Wanda@FLHeadStart.org

TALLAHASSEE, FL – March 24, 2023 – The Florida Head Start Association (FHSA), a nonprofit organization representing Florida's Head Start /Early Head Start Programs, is thrilled to announce two of their state honorees will be recognized on the national stage by the National Head Start Association (NHSA). Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) in partnership with Reach Out and Read Florida and Philip Tavill, President & CEO of Children First, Inc. in Sarasota, FL, joins a list of highly accomplished leaders making notable and significant contributions in our State to help improve the lives of at-risk children and families. "We are extremely proud of the work being done in Florida around the excellent partnerships and community support of Head Start (inclusive of Early Head Start, Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships, Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. Receiving recognition at the national level amplifies our programs' commitment to ensuring our most at-risk children and families are at the forefront of the work they do every day", said FHSA Executive Director Wanda Minick.

The Edward Zigler Innovation Award: Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) and Reach Out and Read Florida this award is presented to a program honoring the work of Dr. Edward Zigler's collaborative efforts to create high-impact services for children and families.

Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) and Reach Out and Read Florida are being recognized for their collaborative efforts in connecting critical stakeholders in the community, medical providers, community partners, public health leaders, advocates, and the general community to address the shared mission of building strong family relationships and breaking barriers in accessing quality care. Over the past four years, the program has collaborated with Reach Out and Read (ROR) Florida to identify and strategically work with medical providers serving the most vulnerable children in their community to receive children's books and resources. Their collaboration also birthed a virtual Health Summit educating 500 attendees about the latest research supporting early brain development through the lens of early relational health. "This partnership and summit can serve as a model for other communities to demonstrate the impact that Head Start programs can have when they strategically collaborate with medical providers and families to address public health issues," said ROR Chief Executive Officer Marty Martinez.

Sargent Shriver Excellence in Community Service Award celebrates a significant organizational achievement in poverty alleviation, early education, or community health. Philip Tavill, President and CEO of Children's First, is being recognized for his innovative achievement in the Sarasota community through fulfilling Sargent Shriver's vision of providing wrap-around support for young children and their families. Children First, Inc. was founded in 1961 by the Junior League of Sarasota. It is the exclusive Head Start and Early Head Start services provider in Sarasota County. It offers high-quality comprehensive and family-strengthening services to hundreds of children, ages birth to five years, and their family members.

Philip Tavill was recently honored for 25 years of service to our community as CEO of Children First and for his commitment to transforming the lives of children and families. Now in his 26th year, he has led the agency to extraordinary heights since assuming his role in 1996, including expanding the Early Head Start program serving babies as young as six weeks old, growing from five locations to 15 sites across Sarasota County, and the formation of the award-winning Nurturing Dads Initiative and Families First Institute. "Philip demonstrates that there is nothing more important than opening the doors of opportunity for the children and families in Sarasota County who need it most. It's so rare for a CEO to remain with one organization for the majority of their career. Philip's longevity is a testament to his dedication to the children and families we serve. We are so fortunate that he has called Children First his home for a quarter century and are so excited at where the agency is headed under his continued leadership," said Children First Chair Emeritus Katherine Martucci.

NHSA will recognize our state leaders at their National Head Start Conference during their Scholarship and Awards Ceremony on May 10, 2023, in Phoenix, AZ.

About FHSA

The Florida Head Start Association is a nonprofit organization working for 40,000 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. It is committed to enhancing and supporting local Head Start programs' capability to deliver high-quality services for our children and families.

About NHSA

The National Head Start Association is committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life. Since 1974, NHSA has worked for policy changes that ensure all income-eligible children have access to the Head Start model.

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Florida Head Start Association
111 N. Gadsden Street, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32301
www.FLHeadStart.org