



NEWS RELEASE

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First Step of Sarasota Holds Sixth Annual Caring Hearts Luncheon

SARASOTA, FL – January 27, 2009 – Supporting First Step of Sarasota's Mothers & Infants program, the sixth annual Caring Hearts Luncheon will be held at Michael's On East on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 11:30 am.

Mothers & Infants provides a safe, supportive environment for pregnant women with substance abuse issues where they can begin a life of recovery while also gaining parenting, educational and vocational skills. Since the program began in 1995, more than 215 healthy, drug-free babies have been born.

This year's event will honor Sandi Stewart, the Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc., as the Caring Hearts "Mom of the Year." Part of the Girl Scout movement for more than 20 years, Sandi has served as a volunteer, finance director and CEO. Under her stewardship, the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast has seen a 25 percent increase in girl membership.

In addition, the first annual "Caring Kids Organization of the Year" award will be presented Forty Carrots Family Center. Founded by Betsy Kane-Hartnett and Diane Weiss, Forty Carrots provides early childhood development and parenting education to thousands of families each year. It focuses on nurturing and building the relationships between parents and their children. Courses offer knowledge from bedtime techniques and feeding routines to understanding common stresses and frustrations that no parent is expected to know from the start. Forty Carrots Family Center offers over 77 opportunities to help families grow stronger in our community.

As in years past, one of the highlights of the luncheon program will be the presentation given by a recent alumna on how her life has been changed based on the time spent in Mothers & Infants. This year will be no different as a recent alumna – Kelly – shares her story.

For reservations or more information about the Caring Hearts Luncheon, contact Kelly French at 552-2065 or visit First Steps website at www.fsos.org and select the special events page.

First Step of Sarasota has provided high-quality, affordable substance abuse treatment and recovery programs on Florida's Gulf Coast for more than 40 years. Last year, more than 15,000 individuals were served through the agency's prevention and treatment programs.

For more information about First Step of Sarasota, or to arrange an interview, contact Grapevine Communications at 941-351-0024 or email amassarofain@grapeinc.com. Grapevine Communications is an award-winning advertising, marketing, and public relations firm based in Sarasota and serving clients nationwide.



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