

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grace Place Raises Over \$1.8 Million at 20th Anniversary Celebration

NAPLES, FL – (December 12, 2024) – Grace Place for Children and Families hosted a remarkable 20th Anniversary Celebration of Grace event, A Night in Emerald City, raising over \$1.8 million to support its mission of empowering Golden Gate families through education and support services. The event, held on December 7, 2024, at the Elite Jets Hangar, commemorated two decades of Grace Place's transformative impact on the community.

As guests arrived, they were escorted down the yellow brick road by Grace Place students, providing a unique opportunity to connect with the individuals their support helps empower. The venue was transformed into a magical Emerald City, complete with enchanting Good and Wicked Witches, and a vibrant atmosphere that brought *The Wizard of Oz* to life. Guests were also treated to a special performance by the students, adding a personal and heartwarming touch to the evening.

The evening featured inspiring stories from students whose lives have been changed by Grace Place's programs, a live auction, and special tributes to honorees who have made an indelible impact: founder Reverend Stephanie Munz Campbell and Chief Program Officer Diane Ponton. The event also recognized the contributions of honorary chairs Julia Van Domelen, Craig & Pat Jilk, and the Schoen Family, whose support has been essential to the growth and success of Grace Place.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who made this evening a resounding success," said Lara Fisher, CEO of Grace Place. "Thanks to the generosity of our donors, sponsors, and guests, we surpassed our fundraising goals and raised more than \$1.8 million. These funds will directly support our educational programs, family support services, and efforts to break the cycle of poverty for the families we serve."

Proceeds from the evening will support Grace Place's early childhood education, after-school enrichment, adult literacy, and family support services, all of which are key to helping families build a stronger future.

Grace Place extends special thanks to the event sponsors whose contributions made the evening possible:

Emerald City Sponsor

- Diane & Mike McGrath
- Julia Van Domelen

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The success of the event underscores the continued support of the Naples community in making a lasting difference in the lives of Grace Place families. The funds raised will help ensure that Grace Place continues to serve as a beacon of hope and opportunity for those in need in Golden Gate and beyond.

Grace Place thanks everyone who attended and supported this unforgettable evening. For more information on Grace Place's programs and how to get involved, visit graceplace.org.

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About Grace Place

Grace Place for Children and Families, celebrating its 20th year, is a nonprofit family literacy center committed to providing pathways out of poverty by educating children and families. Grace Place enrolls over 1200 individuals in its education programs each year. Its nationally recognized Bright Beginnings program, a Grace Place Family Literacy Model®, serves preschool children and their parents. Grace Place School Age Programs, funded by the Florida Department of Education, provides afterschool, summer, and college access programming to K-12 youth. The Adult Education program at Grace Place offers English language, literacy, computer literacy, and citizenship courses. Additionally, the Food Pantry at Grace Place serves over 300 families each week. Collaborating with community partners, we offer medical and mental health screenings, referrals, and financial literacy classes in Golden Gate. Explore volunteer opportunities in literacy, mentoring, adult education, and more at www.graceplacenaples.org.

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