

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Inaugural Beyond the Bookshelf Event Raises \$350,000 to Support Grace Place Programs

Naples, FL — December 4, 2025 — Grace Place is proud to celebrate the extraordinary success of *Beyond the Bookshelf*, its inaugural literacy event, held on December 4, 2025, at Grey Oaks Country Club. The event welcomed over 250 guests and raised an impressive \$350,000 in support of Grace Place for Children and Families.

The morning brought together community leaders, supporters, and advocates for an inspiring conversation centered on education, opportunity, and hope. A highlight of the event was a fireside conversation with Maria Shriver—award-winning journalist, bestselling author, and longtime advocate for women, families, and empowerment—who spoke directly with Grace Place high school students in a powerful and authentic dialogue about purpose, resilience, and investing in people.

Addressing attendees, Shriver commended the community for its commitment to Grace Place's mission, stating:

"I want to commend all of you for supporting an organization that brings out the best in people—one that nurtures and supports them. That is rare, and you should feel really good about the work you are supporting by listening to these young people."

She continued by emphasizing the impact of Grace Place's work on its students:

"You should feel really good here about the work you are supporting, because in listening to these young people, you can see that they feel seen, supported, nurtured, and nourished here."

Reflecting on her experience with Grace Place students, Shriver added:

"You are giving them such a meaningful opportunity through the work you are doing and the organization you are funding. The conversation I had today with Grace Place students will stay with me."

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The event also featured a spirited silent auction and book signing, with each moment contributing to the meaningful impact of the day. Every dollar raised will directly strengthen Grace Place programs—supporting children and families in Golden Gate with the tools, education, and resources needed to build brighter futures.

Grace Place is deeply grateful to its attendees, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and staff whose generosity and dedication made this inaugural event possible. Because of this collective support, Grace Place continues to serve more than 1,300 individuals annually through early childhood education, school-age programs, and adult education courses in English, digital literacy, citizenship, and financial literacy.

Building on the momentum of this successful launch, Grace Place looks forward to continuing *Beyond the Bookshelf* as a platform for thoughtful conversation, community connection, and meaningful investment in the lives of students and families.

Together, we are not only opening doors, but we are also building pathways out of poverty and creating opportunities that last a lifetime.

ABOUT GRACE PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Grace Place for Children and Families, founded in 2004, is a nonprofit family literacy center committed to providing pathways out of poverty by educating children and families. Grace Place enrolls over 1,300 individuals in its education programs each year, offering the nationally recognized early learning initiative Bright Beginnings (nursery to 4 years old), which involves a parent in the early learning needed to be kindergarten ready, and comprehensive School Age Programs (grades K-12) funded by the Florida Department of Education. The organization also provides Adult Education courses and operates a Food Pantry serving hundreds of families weekly. For more information about Grace Place for Children and Families and to explore volunteer opportunities, visit www.graceplacenaples.org.

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