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Feb. 2 Hillsborough County-Wide Presentation to Legislators About Priority of Children's Issues Will Help Usher in the 2011 State Legislative Session

TAMPA, FL – The Children's Board of Hillsborough County, United Way and Hillsborough County will help usher in the 2011 State Legislative season when they join with the community at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 2 at the Children's Board, 1002 E. Palm Avenue, Tampa to present local legislators and other decision-makers with a list of county-wide priority issues affecting children, families and communities

This will be the fourth annual presentation to the Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation and other invited School Board and county officials. Among the top issues that will be presented to the Legislative Delegation:

- (1) Healthy Start and Healthy Families are in three of the Hillsborough County-wide 20 priorities, focusing on restoration, expansion or protection of funding for Healthy Families, Healthy Start and other programs and services that prevent child abuse or help provide health care for young infants, toddlers, young children and pregnant mothers. In 2010, the state Healthy Families budget was cut by nearly one-third.
- (2) Support of efforts to require expunging records for certain juvenile offenders for whom there is an arrest but no conviction.

(Despite a tough budget year, the statewide Children's Movement, which had "Milk Parties" throughout the state this past fall, is calling on legislators to increase the state budget for children by \$300 million, or one percent of the state budget. Most of that money would be needed for just two initiatives: nearly \$183 million in state matching money to provide 300,000 more low-income children with health insurance, and \$89 million to significantly upgrade the state's five-year-old voluntary prekindergarten program by encouraging better teacher training and curriculum. Learn more about the Children's Movement at <http://childrensmovementflorida.org>.)

Editor's Notes: The entire presentation is expected to last from 9 a.m. to about 10 a.m. (preceded by an 8:30

a.m. breakfast). Hillsborough County Healthy Start Coalition Executive Director Jane Murphy will be on hand to speak to funding issues affecting children and families. Rep. Betty Reed, D-Tampa, sponsor of House Bill 193 that would expunge certain juvenile offender records, is expected to be on hand to discuss that proposed legislation.

Breakfast will be provided by a new program from Metropolitan Ministries called Inside the Box, a social entrepreneurship initiative by Metro Ministries which serves the poor and homeless of the Tampa Bay region and feeds 2,000 people a day. Inside the Box provides residents at Metropolitan Ministries the opportunity to receive on-the-job training and prepare for a career in catering and food service. Inside the Box won first place and \$25,000 in seed money from the Children's Board at its 2010 Annual Innovative Business Plan Competition. Executive Chef Cliff Barsi will be on hand to talk about the newly-launched program, which will target serving gourmet box lunches to the Tampa business community.

Media: please use this link to confirm your attendance online: <http://quest.cvent.com/d/bdqgfg/4W>

The Children's Board of Hillsborough County serves as the leading voice and advocate for children and families in our community. The board is the only organization of its kind in Hillsborough County that generates revenue to help children and families. The Children's Board is recognized nationally for its contributions to best practices in policies and programs aiding children and families. Citizens may visit www.childrensboard.org to learn more about the board's programs.

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