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## **Metropolitan Ministries Gourmet Box Lunch Program Wins 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Board Innovative Business Plan Competition**

**TAMPA, FL** (Sept. 16, 2010) – Metropolitan Ministries' "Inside the Box Constructive Catering," which will begin in about a month to provide gourmet box lunches targeted to businesses located in and around downtown Tampa, has won the Children's Board of Hillsborough County's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Innovative Business Plan competition.

Children's Board chair Valerie Goddard announced the \$25,000 first-place award at a recognition event at the Children's Board, located in Ybor City. The \$25,000 grant will go toward Inside the Box marketing and operation costs. All proceeds will go toward providing Boxes of Hope filled with nutritious food for families in crisis, said Metro Ministries executive chef Cliff Barsi.

Inside the Box is 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. The initiative also will provide residents at Metropolitan Ministries the opportunity receive on-the-job training and preparation for a career in catering and food service, Barsi said.

The Inside the Box gourmet box lunch will cost under \$14 per person, including free delivery, and offers a choice of one of three main menu items – a sandwich, entrée or gourmet salad – and two side orders, a drink and dessert. Orders for 10 or more customers at a time are preferred, Barsi said. To order, go online to <http://www.metromin.org> and press the "Inside the Box" button.

The Children's Board awarded second place, and \$15,000, to the MacDonald Training Center for its MTC Textile Productions, which has partnered with SeaGrass Recovery to make patented sediment tubes with nutrients that will be used to restore normally un-repairable propeller scars in seagrass beds. The three other finalists in the competition were the Art for Autism program's Kiosk Café to provide job training for students diagnosed with Autism Syndrome Disorder; MORE HEALTH's user-friendly dental tool kit developed so that even non-professionals can present it to the public; and St. Joseph's Children's Hospital's The Safety Store, located inside St. Joseph's main hospital on Martin Luther King Drive in Tampa.

Children's Board CEO Luanne Panacek said the board is always looking at how it can better sustain organizations it funds and how it can help them build capacity. Goddard added that "building capacity and investing in the community will pay dividends far beyond the present."

*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](http://www.childrensboard.org) to learn more about the board's programs.*