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**Tampa/Hillsborough County Named One of the Nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People, Along with City of St. Petersburg and Manatee County**

**TAMPA, FL (Oct. 12, 2011)** – For the second year in a row, Tampa and Hillsborough County have achieved national recognition as one of America's Promise Alliance's *100 Best Communities for Young People* presented by ING for its initiatives to help young people. Tampa/Hillsborough joins the city of St. Petersburg and Manatee County as three Tampa Bay area repeat winners.

The competition recognizes communities across the country that focus on reducing high school dropout rates and providing service and support to their youth. America's Promise Alliance is the nation's largest partnership organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth by raising awareness, supporting communities, and engaging in nonpartisan advocacy. ING is a global financial institution.

Tampa/Hillsborough County's collaborative spirit and its ability to create partnerships among individuals, organizations, business leaders and the school district helped implement initiatives to provide a pipeline of services for young people. Among the factors that contributed to the community's selection as one of the nation's *100 Best Communities for Young People* for the third time in four years:

- The community's Youth Action Collaborative provides an open forum for young people ages 14 to 21 to work with adults in the community and to give youth an active voice in deliberations and decisions that affect their lives. As a result of the collaborative, several key organizations have formed youth councils to advise on policies and programs within the local government.
- Tampa/Hillsborough County supports its most vulnerable young people with programs like Connected by 25, which annually assists more than 500 students aging out of the foster care system with finding and keeping an apartment, maintaining a bank account, job searches and staying employed.

- With more than 1,000 after-school programs created by The Partnership for Out-of-School Time and funded by the Children's Board, students have a safe place to reside during non-school hours.

More than 100 individuals and organizations volunteer their time and support to maintain these programs.

"We are proud of Tampa and Hillsborough County for being named one of the America's Promise Alliance's 100 Best," said Bobbi Davis, resource development manager for the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. "This award recognizes the hard work of many community members that have dedicated their time to making a difference in the lives of our young people."

"In a nation where 7,000 students drop out of high school every day, we hope Tampa/Hillsborough County's initiatives inspire other communities across the nation to take action to solve the challenges facing their young people," said Marguerite W. Kondracke, America's Promise Alliance president and CEO.

The winners are a diverse group, ranging from small communities to large cities. A list of all 2011 winners can be found beginning at <http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/100-Best-Communities-for-Young-People/2011-Winners.aspx>.

(The Children's Board will host a live webcast watch party of the national celebration and official 100 Best announcement taking place in Washington, D.C. at noon on Oct. 12.)

*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.*