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**IT'S FREE. IT'S EASY.
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WILL DISCOVER THEIR POTENTIAL
WEDU ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 5TH ANNUAL
Be More Awards**

Tampa, FL – Now more than any other time in recent history, local nonprofit organizations need support from the community they serve. For the fifth consecutive year, WEDU, west central Florida's primary PBS station, is accepting applications that highlight the best work from area 501(c)(3) organizations, which will be celebrated at the January 14, 2010 **WEDU Be More Awards™** ceremony and luncheon – an event that has become known as the “Academy Awards® for Nonprofits.” Through November 6, 2009, WEDU will accept applications from nonprofit organizations, both large and small throughout the Florida Suncoast, who are invited to demonstrate their outstanding achievements in a variety of categories during the timeframe of September 1, 2008 – August 31, 2009. There is no charge to apply and the easy-to-complete WEDU Be More Awards™ applications can be found at wedu.org/bemore or by calling 800.354.9338 ext. 2241.

Nonprofit organizations can apply in one of four award categories ranging from outstanding marketing initiatives (*Be More Informed*), exceptional educational outreach (*Be More Knowledgeable*), innovative organization endeavors (*Be More Brilliant*), and extraordinary fundraising and event efforts (*Be More Entertaining*). In addition, organizations can encourage their supporters to vote on the **WEDU Be More Awards™ People's Choice Poll** (*Be More Humble*) scheduled to begin November 13, 2009. The winners of all of the aforementioned awards as well as the prestigious **Judges Choice Award** (*Be More Encouraged*), **The Mason Dixon Award for Volunteerism** (*Be More Involved*) – a new award this year, and the coveted **WEDU Be More Awards™ Nonprofit Organization of the Year** honor (*Be More Unstoppable*) will be announced at the awards luncheon at the A La Carte Event Pavilion in Tampa, Florida.

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Applications submitted for a WEDU Be More Award™ are reviewed by an independent panel of 12 impartial judges comprised of business, philanthropic and civic leaders from the WEDU viewing area. All applicants are featured on the active WEDU website for several months leading up to the actual event. The five award finalists in each category (8 categories/40 finalists) also receive onsite exposure during the ceremony, and the ultimate winners are featured in a one-hour WEDU televised special aired during primetime to more than 1.7 million homes in west central Florida. Historically, this exposure combined has proven to be incredibly beneficial for the participating organizations in terms of community awareness, volunteer support and funding both through individual gifts and corporation and foundation grants. (The 2009 TV special and recent testimonials can be found on wedu.org/bemore.)

Tampa Bay media personality Jack Harris will once again serve as the master of ceremonies for the January 14th celebration and the **WEDU Be More Awards™** luncheon will also feature The Bank of Tampa *Hall of Heroes* – a reception showcasing all organizations nominated for a WEDU Be More Award™; an inspiring Keynote Speaker; and an opportunity to network with philanthropists; business and civic leaders; charitable organizations and dedicated volunteers – many of whom are the unsung heroes of the community. The **WEDU Be More Awards™** is supported in part by The Bank of Tampa; and the A La Carte Event Pavilion. For more information about the event or to purchase tickets or tables visit wedu.org/bemore. Tickets are \$50 per person; \$600 for Community Hero Table of 10 or \$1,000 for Philanthropist Table of 10. The awareness-building and fundraising event is produced by and supports WEDU, a 501(c)(3) organization.

A nationally-recognized, award-winning program, the **WEDU Be More Awards™** generates awareness for nonprofit organizations and celebrates the spirit of goodwill throughout the community. The WEDU Be More Awards™ have received national attention through a prestigious “Academy Awards® like” approach in honoring charities. In addition, PBS, based in Washington, D.C., took notice of this innovative program after its inaugural year and contracted with WEDU to assist in the distribution of the “Be More Awards” program nationally. The first PBS station to host the event outside of Florida was KAET based in Phoenix, followed by stations in Tennessee, Denver and Indiana among others.

WEDU partners with many cultural and educational institutions in west central Florida to bring the arts, education and culture to its television audiences and members, and enrich and inspire the community it serves. For more information about the WEDU Be More Awards™, programming, TV schedules, channel guides, special events, outreach efforts and community partnerships visit www.wedu.org or call 800.354.9338.

WEDU, a 501(c)(3) organization, is west central Florida's primary PBS station reaching 16 counties including the Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pasco, Polk and Sarasota areas through multiple media platforms including on-air broadcasting and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. WEDU, recently received its fourth consecutive four-star rating by Charity Navigator, an honor only achieved by 6% of charities nationwide, is financially supported by its local community, and provides the highest quality education, information, and entertainment programming, special events and outreach activities.

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