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(Photos Available Upon Request)



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Winners Announced During 10th Annual WEDU Be More Awards

West Central Florida's nonprofits and volunteers received honors during the commemorative annual luncheon and ceremony held in Tampa



Tampa, FL — WEDU PBS held the 2015 WEDU Be More Awards on Thursday, February 12th before a sold out crowd of over 500 guests at the A La Carte Pavilion in Tampa.

Continuing the tradition of honoring Tampa Bay area nonprofit organizations, the annual community event began

at 11:00 a.m. with the *Hall of Heroes* followed by an inspiring luncheon and awards ceremony at Noon.

The WEDU Be More Awards was created by WEDU PBS to help raise awareness for local nonprofits and their service to West Central Florida. Annually, the program helps introduce new donors, volunteers, and those in need of services to the worthy nonprofit organizations.

Utilizing a panel of impartial judges who spent weeks reviewing applications and nominations, **WEDU**, West Central Florida's primary PBS station, recognized nonprofit organizations and individuals who applied or were nominated for honors in a variety of categories - culminating with one organization being named the *WEDU Be More Unstoppable, Nonprofit Organization of the Year (2014)*.

To help commemorate the 10th year of the community event, guest presenters included: Hailey Scheinman of Livy's Hope and the first winner of the Be More Inspiring Award; Dalia Colon, Host of WEDU Arts Plus; Thomas Mantz, Executive Director of last year's Be More Unstoppable Nonprofit of the Year, Feeding American Tampa Bay; Ryan Nece, the inspiration behind the Be More Positive ABC Action News Award. The ceremony was emceed by Cathy Unruh, Lissette Campos, and Jack Harris.

The winner of this year's Be More Unstoppable Nonprofit of the Year Award will be featured on an upcoming episode of **Up Close with Cathy Unruh** and was presented with a \$2,500 Community Investment Grant from WEDU.

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BE MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL

WINNER: Jim Freyvogel, MacDonald Training Center

Engaged Philanthropist Award | This award recognized an individual who distinguished himself or herself in the nonprofit community by engaging entrepreneurial skills to build a successful nonprofit endeavor. *Examples may include:* Utilizing a keen business sense to build a new nonprofit serving our community; providing the driving force for a unique and successful fundraising campaign to support an existing nonprofit organization's initiative. The top candidates that achieved the most votes via an online poll during the voting period were further researched by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Finalists: Beverly Steele, The Steele Organization (TSO), LLC; Debra Campbell, Forward Thinking Initiatives; Glen Schubert, Instruments of Change; Heather Barrow, High Risk Hope; Jesse Stokes, The Pink Magnolia Charities

BE MORE RELEVANT

WINNER: The Junior League of Tampa

Best Use of Video Award | Awarded to the organization that told a compelling story through video that has the power to compel someone to seek services, volunteer time, or support an organization financially. The top candidates that achieved the most votes via an online poll during the voting period were further reviewed by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Finalists: Children First, Inc.; Crisis Center of Tampa Bay; High Risk Hope; More Health, Inc.; MOSI

BE MORE OUTSPOKEN

WINNER: Angela Emery, The Haven of RCS

Voice of Tampa Bay Award | This honor will be bestowed upon the individual, family, or organization that has lent a unique voice to bring awareness, credence, support, or action to an issue or cause faced by our citizens and thus making a tremendous impact in our community. The top candidates that achieved the most votes via an online poll during the voting period were further researched by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Finalists: Greg Gebler, R'Club at Paul B. Stephens ESE Center; Masatoshi Mochizuki, Frameworks of Tampa Bay; Metropolitan Ministries; Niki Cross, STAAR Ministries Corporation; Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative

BE MORE INVOLVED

WINNER: Margaret Goodson, David A. Straz Jr. Center for Performing Arts

Mason Dixon Award for Volunteerism | One person can make an extraordinary difference. These award finalists were culled from an online poll driven by votes from the general public in the WEDU PBS viewing area. Local radio personality and philanthropist, Mason Dixon, ultimately chose and presented the award to the most-deserving recipient from nominees that received the most online support during the voting period.

Finalists: Alyss Katz, Humane Society of Tampa Bay; Jane Hussar, Pinellas County Schools; Tina Narron, GTE Financial; Wade Sabourin, Heart Strings for Heroes; Wendy Millaway, Children's Home Society of Florida

BE MORE POSITIVE

WINNER: Raymond Gunder

Positively Tampa Bay, ABC Action News Award | This honor was bestowed upon an individual or group of people whose simple act of kindness made a tremendous impact on someone's life. The winner was selected based on the selfless giving of time, treasure or talents. Nominees and finalists were selected by ABC Action News. The semi-finalists and ultimate winner was chosen by ABC Action News' Positively Tampa Bay and The Ryan Nece Foundation – the inspiration for this award.

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Finalists: Chelsea Oglevie and Leah Pemberton; Dani Thompson; Keith Keohler

BE MORE HUMBLE

WINNER: Julie Weintraub's Hands Across the Bay

Warren Averett People's Choice Award | This award was driven by an online poll with votes from the general public in the WEDU PBS viewing area. **The poll automatically included a listing of all organizations that submitted an application in one or more of the five application categories.** This prestigious award exhibits the connection and relationship the organization has with the community and the people it serves by allowing area citizens to honor the nonprofit that they feel most exemplifies the spirit of the community. **Sponsored by Warren Averett CPAs and Advisors**

Finalists: Fostering Hope Florida; Franciscan Center; The Junior League of Tampa; Metropolitan Ministries; Random Acts of Flowers

BE MORE BRILLIANT

WINNER: Asolo Repertory Theatre, Inc.

Innovation Award | This award recognized initiatives, projects, and/or services that are unique, creative, or innovative and was presented to the organization responsible for the development, coordination, delivery, and results of the project. *Examples may include:* Resourcefulness when challenged with a limited budget; superior utilization of collaborative community partnerships; or ingenious staffing options by mobilizing members and/or volunteer support.

Finalists: Humane Society of Tampa Bay, Inc.; Lazydays Employee Foundation and Camelot Community Care; Lift Academy; National Society to Prevent Blindness; USO Central Florida

BE MORE ENTERTAINING

WINNER: High Risk Hope

Special Events Award | This award recognized the uniqueness and effectiveness of a special event and the success in achieving outlined objectives. *Examples may include:* A related series of events, single original event, or fundraiser to recognize, salute, assist, celebrate people or businesses, brand your organization and/or build/strengthen relationships with supporters.

Finalists: Alpha House of Tampa; Children's Cancer Center; Friends of the Selby Library; Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County, Inc.; The Junior League of Tampa

BE MORE ENRICHED

WINNER: Coexistence, Inc. (Embracing Our Differences)

Greenberg Taurig Arts & Culture Award | This award recognized culturally-based organizations that contribute to the spirit of adventure and exploration through education in the arts and culture by creating an exciting and engaging museum experience to visitors. *Examples may include:* Programs or experiences related to the arts, performance, historic, or zoological; programs that provide cultural experiences to audiences who might not otherwise have opportunities to witness or be an active participant.

Finalists: Art Center Sarasota; Florida Studio Theatre; Glazer Children's Museum, Ruth Eckerd Hall

BE MORE INFORMED

WINNER: Ad 2 Tampa Bay

Nielsen Marketing Campaign Award | This award recognized the execution of creative and results-driven original marketing campaigns using multimedia platforms including, but not limited to, broadcast, print, social media and/or

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grassroots awareness campaigns. The finalists demonstrated direct impact to established goals. *Examples may include:* A support element or collection of elements developed to promote, publicize, introduce, or create an identity or brand for a specific organization, service, program, or idea. **Sponsored by Nielsen**

Finalists: Buddy Baseball, Inc.; Children First, Inc. Crisis Center of Tampa Bay; Frameworks of Tampa Bay, Inc.; More Health, Inc.

BE MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE

WINNER: Glazer Children's Museum

Educational Outreach Award | This award recognized the organization that through a specific project offered guidance, knowledge, emotional or physical support, and/or a mentorship program aimed at improving specific aspects of community life. The project introduced and/or conducted programs to enrich and empower the community. *Examples may include:* Outreach or educational programs that effectively raised awareness or brought a new audience to an organization or cause.

Finalists: Crescent of Hernando, Inc.; Franciscan Center; Morton Plant Mease Hospital Care Foundation, Inc.; Starting Right, Now; Sweetwater Organic Community Farm, Inc.

BE MORE INSPIRING

WINNER: Chrissy Dos Santos, Frameworks of Tampa Bay

Rising Star Award | This award recognized an individual, under the age of 21, who has distinguished himself or herself in the community directly accredited to their inspiration, dedication, motivation, or acts of kindness. Nominees represent up-and-comers whose accomplishments in, and contributions to, our community make them stand out among their peers and position them as future leaders. A short essay on the nominee's impact was necessary at time of nomination. Candidates could nominate themselves or be nominated by others. The top candidates that achieved the most votes via an online poll were further researched by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Finalists: Allison Davis, BUDS Tennis; Emily Brown, Kappa Delta USF; Gabrielle Mondello, Best Buddies; Jared Thayer, Project Sunshine; Jesse Stokes, The Pink Magnolia Charities

BE MORE EMPOWERED

WINNER: Dress for Success Tampa Bay

Small Nonprofit Award | This award recognized the small nonprofit that best demonstrated the truth in statement that "big things come in small packages." This award recognizes organizations that despite its modest size, has a major positive impact on our community. A short essay on the organizations impact was necessary at time of nomination. Candidates could nominate themselves or be nominated by others. The top candidates that achieved the most votes via an online poll during the voting period were further researched by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Finalists: ECHO of Brandon; Fostering Hope Florida; High Risk Hope; OASIS Network; Random Acts of Flowers

BE MORE ENCOURAGED

WINNER: Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County, Inc.

Judges' Choice Award | The Judges' Choice Award was given to an organization demonstrating an overall appeal due to its original and extraordinary approach to its respective. Not necessarily driven by an organization's measurable results, this award is decided entirely by the WEDU Be More Award judges based on majority vote and consensus.

Finalists: Champions for Children, Inc.; Computer Mentors Group, Inc.; Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful; Sunrise of Pasco County inc.; Visions of Hope International

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BE MORE UNSTOPPABLE

WINNER: High Risk Hope

Nonprofit of the Year Award | This award is the most coveted and is determined through extensive research. It was ultimately decided by an independent judging committee and given to one organization that, through a superior level of service, helps their constituency be more. Selected from all submitted applications, the criteria to win this award consisted of overall organizational excellence; fulfillment of the Four Commitments to the Community, including service to the organizations' constituency, level of community impact, financial viability and embodiment of overall community goodwill. In addition to many other benefits, the organization recognized with this award received a \$2,500 WEDU Community Investment Grant.

Finalists: Ad 2 Tampa Bay; Asolo Theatre, Inc.; Coexistence, Inc (Embracing Our Differences); More Health, Inc.; Ruth Eckerd Hall

The 2015 WEDU Be More Awards were supported in part by:



Bernard F. and Mary Ann Powell Foundation

ABOUT WEDU PBS

WEDU is West Central Florida's leading PBS station reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of multi-media platforms including: television programming, station website, www.wedu.org and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU's focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (ORC International's DualFrame CARAVAN, January 2015). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU visit www.wedu.org; WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter (@wedupbs) or call (813) 254-9338.

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