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Area Nonprofits and Volunteers Announced as Finalists for 11th Annual WEDU Be More Awards

Tampa, FL — WEDU PBS announced today the finalists for the 2016 WEDU Be More Awards. The eleventh annual WEDU Be More Awards will take place on Thursday, February 4, 2016 at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg. The annual community event will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the Hall of Heroes followed by an inspiring luncheon and awards ceremony starting at 12:00 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.wedu.org/bemore.

Utilizing a panel of impartial judges who spent weeks reviewing applications and nominations, WEDU, West Central Florida’s primary PBS station, will recognize 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 (2015).

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.

The finalists include:

BE MORE ENTERTAINING
Special Events Award | This award recognizes 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.

Creative Clay, Inc.  ●  Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc.  ●  Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County  ●  National Society to Prevent Blindness  ●  Quantum Leap Farm, Inc.

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**BE MORE BRILLIANT**  
**Innovation Award** | This award recognizes initiatives, projects, and/or services that are unique, creative, or innovative and will be 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.

Alpha House of Tampa  ● Champions for Children, Inc.  ● Coexistence, Inc. (Embracing Our Differences)  ● Gulf Coast Dental Outreach, Inc.  ● More Health, Inc.  ● R’Club Child Care  
The Junior League of Tampa  ● Wheels of Success

**BE MORE KNOWLEDGABLE**  
**Bank of Tampa Educational Outreach Award** | This award will recognize 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 should introduce and/or conducting 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. **Sponsored by Bank of Tampa**

CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse, Inc.)  ● Cresent of Hernando, Inc.  
Florida Holocaust Museum, Inc.  ● Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, Inc.  
Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida  ● Project Prosper, Inc.  
Starting Right, Now

**BE MORE INFORMED**  
**Nielsen Marketing Campaign Award** | This award recognizes the execution of creative and results-driven original marketing campaigns using multimedia platforms including, but not limited to, broadcast, print, social media and/or grassroots awareness campaigns. The applicant should demonstrate 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**

Auto Club Group Traffic Safety Foundation, Inc.  ● Metropolitan Ministries Senior Connection Center, Inc.  ● The Arc Tampa Bay Foundation

**BE MORE ENRICHED**  
**Greenberg Traurig Arts & Culture Award** | This award recognizes 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. **Sponsored by Greenberg Traurig**

Art Center Sarasota, Inc.  ● Florida Holocaust Museum  ● Great Explorations, Inc.  
Sarasota Contemporary Dance  ● The American Stage Company, Inc.

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BE MORE HUMBLE

Warren Averett People’s Choice Award | This award is driven by an online poll with votes from the general public in the WEDU viewing area. The poll automatically includes a listing of all organizations that submitted an application. 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

The Arc Tampa Bay Foundation • Cypress Initiative, Inc. • Dress for Success, Inc. Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. • Freedom to Walk Foundation Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, Inc. • Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County Jesus Cares, Inc. • Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida R’Club Child Care
BE MORE EMPOWERED

Small Nonprofit Award | This award will recognize the small nonprofit that best demonstrates the truth in statement that “big things come in small packages.” This award will recognize organizations with a budget under $500,000 and despite its modest size, has a major positive impact on our community. The top candidates have achieved the most votes via an online poll during the voting period will be further researched by an impartial judging panel to decide the ultimate winner.

Answered Prayer Project • Girlstories Theatre • Heart Gallery of Pinellas and Pasco
Julie Weintraub’s Hands Across the Bay • Marine Families • Random Acts of Flowers
Service Club of Manatee County • The Cypress Initiative, Inc. • The Kind Mouse Productions

BE MORE INVOLVED

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 viewing area. Local radio personality and philanthropist, Mason Dixon, will ultimately choose and present the award to the most-deserving recipient from nominees that receive the most online support during the voting period.

Kevin Bakewell, Prevent Blindness Florida • Janet Ettleman, Gulf Coast Dental Outreach
Dr. Gerard Hubell, Vision USA • Christina Norcia, SOURCE Productions
Russ Oberbrecklin, Buddy Baseball • Lisl Schick, The Florida Holocaust Museum
Nicole Stokes, Northwestern Mutual • Thomas VanAntwerp, Toastmasters International

BE MORE Outspoken

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.

Jesse Stokes, The Pink Magnolia Charities • Melissa Dohme, Julie Weintraub’s Hands Across the Bay • Niki Cross, STAAR Ministry • The Florida Holocaust Museum

BE MORE POSITIVE

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

Andrew Lumish • Brian Sullivan • Michelle and Todd Schnitt
Javel Kenty • Mia Lopez

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BE MORE ENCOURAGED

Judges’ Choice Award | The Judges’ Choice Award is 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.

Are You Safe, Inc. ♦ Freedom to Walk Foundation ♦ Sunrise of Pasco
The Arc of Tampa Bay Foundation ♦ The Children’s Museum of Tampa

BE MORE UNSTOPPABLE

Nonprofit of the Year Award | This award is the most coveted and is determined through extensive research. It is 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 consists 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 receives a $2,500 WEDU Community Investment Grant.

Quantum Leap Farm ♦ Starting Right, Now ♦ Wheels of Success

The 2016 WEDU Be More Awards are sponsored by:

The Bank of Tampa
Florida Hospital
Nielsen
Tampa Bay Times
Tecof Energy
Warren Averett
ABC Action News
Ray’s Up
American Marketing

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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