

Communications Office
Phone: 850-681-7002
Fax: 866-596-9513



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jenna Brown

Phone: 850-487-6344

jjbrown@thechildrensforum.com

PANEL OF CHAMPIONS ADVOCATE FOR QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

TALLAHASSEE, FL (January 6, 2011) What do a chancellor for Florida's State University System, a congresswoman, a director of youth and community programs for the Miami Dolphins, a retired publisher of the Miami Herald, a judge, school superintendent and a sheriff all have in common? They're all among an elite group called the Panel of Champions that help to spread awareness of the benefits that quality afterschool programs provide for children.

The Panel of Champions, an initiative of the Florida Afterschool Network, speak to business and community leaders, policy makers and legislators about the wisdom of supporting and investing in quality afterschool programs. They also mentor and tutor to students, volunteer, provide resources such as sporting equipment of school supplies, adopt and provide financial support to afterschool programs in their communities.

"We applaud the Panel of Champions for their dedication to sharing the message about the importance of quality afterschool programs," said Larry Pintacuda, executive director of the Florida Afterschool Network. "Multiple studies show that children in quality afterschool programs have better school attendance rates, promotion rates, and FCAT test scores. Furthermore, they have fewer serious disciplinary offenses as well as

lower dropout and suspension rates than their peers who do not participate in afterschool programs.”

The Panel of Champions include:

- Vivian Alarcon, Military Child Care Liaison for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
- Frank Brogan, Chancellor for Florida’s State University System
- Kathy Castor, Congresswomen for Florida District 11 Tampa
- John Frusciante, Retired Judge, 17th Judicial Circuit
- Suzette Harvey, Executive Director of PrimeTime West Palm Beach
- Jim Kallinger, Former Legislator
- Michael Lannon, Superintendent of Schools in St. Lucie County
- David Lawrence, Retired Publisher of the Miami Herald and President of the Children’s Movement of Florida
- Karl Nurse, City Council Member, St. Petersburg
- Norm Penner, President & CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs in St. Lucie County
- Twan Russell, Director of Youth and Community Programs for the Miami Dolphins
- John Rutherford, Sheriff for Jacksonville/Duval

For more information about the Panel of Champions or the Florida Afterschool Network, please contact Larry Pintacuda at 850-402 5437 or lpintacuda@floridacsc.org.