

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation Surpasses \$25 Million Donated to Help Children in Need in Northwest Florida**

***\$2 Million donated to 16 Northwest Florida Children's Charities in 2021 during a private check presentation ceremony at the Henderson***

**September 8, 2021 (Miramar Beach, Fla.)** – Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF), recognized as the fifth largest charity wine auction in the U.S. by *Wine Spectator*, is pleased to announce that since its inception, it has donated more than \$25 million to help children in need in Northwest Florida. The positive impact of these funds has helped an estimated 100,000 at-risk youth with services ranging from medical care to food insecurity over a 16 year period. This year, DCWAF donated \$2 million to 16 children's charities in Northwest Florida following its second virtual auction on April 25. Each charity was awarded their funding in a private check presentation ceremony, adapted to fit social distancing guidelines.

"The fact that DCWAF has just celebrated 16 years of philanthropy is a testament to the values of so many people in our community," said Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation President John Russell. "Our supporters and donors have shown their commitment to our mission from our very first auction in 2006. Because of their generosity, DCWAF has weathered the great recession, the Deep Water Horizon oil spill, and now the Covid pandemic. The \$25 million raised and donated to our charity partners has had a profound impact on the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families. Our charity partners supply all the inspiration we need to continue our mission for years to come."

This year's auction, which was broadcast virtually for the second year due to COVID-19, marks 16 years of charitable giving for DCWAF. The amount donated is an \$800,000 increase over the previous year and is an outstanding success for DCWAF's partner organizations in a time when almost all fundraising events have struggled to return due to the ever-evolving pandemic.

The 2021 recipients of Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation funds include:

AMIkids Emerald Coast received \$105,000 to fund a GED program for at risk students between the ages of 16 – 24.

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast received \$175,000 to fund a new CT scanner to help diagnose and accurately treat pediatric patients in the Emergency Department as well as a Child Life Specialist and Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast received \$125,250 to allow 167 students from low-income households to attend programming for one full year. The programming is designed to provide unique opportunities to learn, grow and to recognize youth for their achievements in an effort to steer them clear of personal failure.

Children in Crisis received \$150,000 to fund the facilitation of housing for abused, neglected, and abandoned children. On-site housing provides stability, shelter, house parents, food, clothing, and necessary items to help children live a safe and healthy lifestyle over the next year.

Children's Volunteer Health Network received \$100,000 to fund and serve underinsured and uninsured children in need of dental care. These funds will allow for hygienists and staff on the Mobile Dental Clinic, the Healthcare Referral Network, and dental supplies for the Mobile Clinic to assist with children in need of dental and medical care.

Emerald Coast Autism Center received \$125,000 to support the ECAC Phase II Capital Campaign which will provide a new building for teens entering the Transition to Work program, and in turn allow the Autism Center more space on their primary campus to serve young children on the autism spectrum in need of behavioral therapy.

Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center received \$150,000 to support mental health therapy program, the case advocacy program that facilitates a child-friendly atmosphere offering counseling, family services, and coordination of investigations for child abuse and neglect, and the prevention program that that educate and empower students and all relevant adults with information and strategies to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, digital dangers, and all types of child abuse and exploitation.

Food for Thought Outreach received \$150,000 to fund food and other supplies for their Backpack Program, available to over 3,400 students receiving free or reduced lunch, and Curbside Services, offered monthly at each pantry location to supplement the needs of families struggling with food insecurity.

Habitat for Humanity of Walton County received \$150,000 to fund building homes for families with children in North and South Walton County.

Mental Health Association of Okaloosa and Walton Counties received \$120,000 to fund the Brain Health Program geared toward early identification, assessment, and treatment for approximately 20 uninsured students ages 12 to 21 who experience mental health or substance abuse issues.

Opportunity Place, Inc. received \$115,000 to fund immediate housing for homeless children and their families to ensure they are safe and secure. These funds will facilitate a variety of child services including child-centered case management support, shelter services, child and family assistance, and enrichment activities.

Pathways for Change received \$20,400 to fund their reentry program.

Shelter House of Northwest Florida received \$100,000 to fund mental health play therapy, counseling, and advocacy for youth touched by domestic violence as well as childcare, and other program supplies.

The Arc of the Emerald Coast received \$140,000 to fund the renovation of their facility warehouse into an after-school program center for children living with disabilities.

Westonwood Ranch received \$145,000 for scholarships for individuals with developmental differences to include the Part-Time Job Skills Program as well as funding maintenance and repairs to the Educational Center and Aquaponics Farm and the purchase of a second transportation vehicle.

Youth Village received \$105,000 to fund program operations and scholarships for children from low-income households to attend their VPK and after-school programs.

DCWAF is also proud to contribute once again to the Jumonville Family Children's Fund; a reserve fund intended to serve as a safety net for DCWAF and its benefitting charities during emergency situations. The dates for next year's Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend, the Foundation's signature fundraising event, are set for April 22 - 24, 2022. The Foundation is already planning in anticipation of its 17th annual auction and will release tickets and details on the auction's format later this fall. Learn more at <http://www.DCWAF.org>.

###

#### **About Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation**

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation connects wine enthusiasts to raise money to benefit children in need in Northwest Florida. Founded in 2005, Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) has donated \$25 million to Northwest Florida charities by hosting world class wine and culinary events. These funds have impacted the lives of over 100,000 youth, including those afflicted by health issues and abuse. Currently ranked number five, DCWAF has been recognized as one of the nation's 'Top 10 Charity Wine Auction in the U.S.' by *Wine Spectator Magazine* for the last nine consecutive years.

#### **Contact:**

Kate MacMillan

Communications Manager | Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation

[kate@dcwaf.org](mailto:kate@dcwaf.org) | 850.650.3732

For images and video of this year's check presentation ceremony please visit: