



December 11, 2011 - South Florida - Brittany Elder: TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN TAKES FIRST PLACE WITH ITS INAUGURAL "STRIDES FOR EDUCATION" 5K WALK/RUN.

Supporters of education join in statewide effort to provide college scholarships

MIAMI, FL (December 7, 2011) – More than 3,000 walkers, runners and volunteers joined Take Stock in Children, a statewide non-profit organization with a 16 year history of breaking the cycle of poverty by providing scholarships, mentors and hope, for its inaugural "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Run effort on Saturday, November 19. A series of events across the state proved to be a success with over \$350,000 raised in support of Florida's low-income youth who wish to pursue a college education.

Take Stock in Children's "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Run events took place across Florida on the same day in Bradford, Brevard, Broward/Palm Beach, Collier/Immokalee, Escambia, Franklin, Lake/Sumter, Lee, Miami-Dade, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The funds raised will be used to help provide college scholarships for the many deserving students that Take Stock in Children serves.

"With the cost of tuition and other college-related expenses rising significantly, children throughout Florida are struggling more than ever to achieve a higher education," says Richard Berkowitz, State Board Chair of Take Stock in Children and the "Strides For Education" originator. "Strides For Education was a great opportunity for us to engage so many of our students, family members and mentors around the state, as well as gather support from individuals and businesses to help our scholars along the path to success."

With a unique public and private model of funding, Take Stock in Children will be able to match the funds raised dollar for dollar to provide many of its students with Florida Prepaid STARS scholarships. Take Stock in Children currently serves nearly 8,000 students in grades 6-12 annually throughout 67 counties in Florida.

Take Stock in Children's "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Run statewide sponsors included the Helios Education Foundation, Comcast, Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant, Pollo Tropical, Florida Lottery, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida and Staples.

To learn more about Take Stock in Children, or becoming a valued volunteer or mentor, please call 888-322-4673 or visit www.takestockinchildren.org.



*Photo caption: Richard Berkowitz, State Board Chair of Take Stock in Children; Bettee Collister, President/CEO of Take Stock in Children Palm Beach County; Emilio Alonso-Mendoza, President/CEO of Take Stock in Children; and Keli Fulton, WPTV News Anchor lead the way at the Broward/Palm Beach “Strides For Education” event.

About Take Stock in Children

Take Stock in Children is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization with a solid 16 year history of providing mentors, educational scholarships and hope for Florida’s low-income and at-risk youth. The organization has provided educational support and college scholarships for over 17,000 children in partnership with more than 800 public schools

throughout 67 counties in Florida. It is the only scholarship mentoring program with the mission of breaking the cycle of poverty through education, and has attained a high school graduation rate of 92 percent in Florida (as compared to Florida's average graduation rate of 76%). The program's multi-year commitment to students and their comprehensive program services begin in middle school and continue through high school graduation and into college. Special emphasis is placed on student accountability and specific measurable outcomes. Take Stock in Children students pledge to meet with their assigned mentor once a week, maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5, and remain drug and crime free. Upon successful high school graduation, as a fulfillment of their contractual agreement, students are then awarded a college scholarship to any college, university or vocational school in the state of Florida. To learn more about Take Stock in Children, please call 888-322-4673 or visit www.takestockinchildren.org.