



MEDIA ADVISORY

WHAT: Gov. Crist at Step Up For Students Rally

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Friday, Oct. 16

WHERE: Mount Bethel Christian Academy, Fort Lauderdale

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Gov. Crist visits Fort Lauderdale school Friday for celebration of Tax Credit Scholarships

Gov. Charlie Crist and key civic and business leaders will join together in Fort Lauderdale on Friday to celebrate students from low-income families who have been helped by a program that provides education options they would not otherwise have.

The sixth annual Step Up For Students Donor Appreciation Rally honoring the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship and its corporate sponsors will begin at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 16, at the Mount Bethel Christian Academy, 901 NW 11th Avenue, in Fort Lauderdale. Crist will be joined by a variety of civic, education and business leaders, including:



- Florida civil rights icon Rev. H.K. Matthews from Pensacola, who marched with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma and was jailed 35 times for his protests
- Julio Fuentes, founder of the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and president of the Hispanic Council for Reform in Educational Options
- Antonio T. Coley, City Executive for Ft. Lauderdale, BB&T (Branch Banking & Trust Company)
- Betsy Mitchell, Senior Vice President overseeing Florida Division operations for Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings (LabCorp)
- Debra Garza, Divisional Vice President of Government and Community Relations at Walgreens

The event will also feature students such as: Antonio Trigo, a freshman at Miami Union Academy who once regularly turned in an academic performance of Cs and Ds when he was younger but with the help of the scholarship and a devoted grandmother ultimately addressed his fellow eighth-graders at Mt. Olivet Seventh-day Adventist School in Fort Lauderdale as their valedictorian; and Leticia Roig, a fifth-grader at Roblanca Academy in Hialeah who thrives in subjects she once failed.

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship provides educational options for students from households whose income meets federal guidelines for free and reduced-price lunch. Corporate donations provide annual private school tuition scholarships of up to \$3,950. For their contributions, companies receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. The program served 23,871 students in about 1,000 private schools this past year.

Step Up For Students is the nonprofit group that oversees the scholarship program and thrives thanks to the benefit of its donors. Step Up For Students takes this annual opportunity to thank its supporters, which include Walgreens, the title sponsor of Friday's event.

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