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**TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN OF MANATEE AND SARASOTA COUNTIES PRESENT
THE 2nd ANNUAL "STRIDES FOR EDUCATION" 5K WALK/RUN ON SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 8, 2012**

Statewide effort aims to raise funds for college scholarships for Florida's low-income students

SARASOTA, FL (October 30, 2012) – Take Stock in Children of Manatee and Sarasota Counties have partnered together to host this year's 2nd Annual "[Strides For Education](#)" 5K Walk/Run at 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 8 at New College, as part of a statewide effort to raise college funds for Florida's deserving low-income youth. Hillsborough, Manatee, Pinellas, Pasco and Sarasota have partnered to raise \$1 million in college scholarships for the Tampa Bay region.

"Take Stock in Children's 'Strides For Education' 5K Walk/Run is the perfect way to involve the local community in our efforts and help raise funding for our scholars who desire to earn a postsecondary education," says Lisa Bechtold, executive director at Take Stock in Children of Sarasota County. "Our goal is to continue growing our program each year so that we may support even more students along the path to success."

Take Stock in Children aims to have 10,000 participants statewide as a part of this annual effort, which will raise much needed funds to provide college scholarships for low-income students. With rising tuition costs and significant increases of other college-related expenses, children throughout Florida are struggling more than ever to achieve their dreams of a college education.

Take Stock in Children's "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Run is open to all individuals, families, companies and local organizations. The "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Runs will feature family-friendly activities, giveaways, and much more. Registration is \$25 per person, with all proceeds benefitting Take Stock in Children, a statewide non-profit organization with a 17 year history of providing scholarships, mentors and hope to more than 18,000 deserving youth. Take Stock in Children of Manatee and Sarasota Counties currently serve more than 400 students in grades 6-12 annually.

Take Stock in Children is seeking participants, volunteers and sponsors for this statewide effort. As an official Walk/Run sponsor, you can join a host of major companies who support the mission of Take Stock in Children and help students achieve their college dreams. Sponsors to date include the AT&T, Comcast, Helios Education Foundation, Berkowitz Pollack Brant, Florida Blue, Pollo Tropical, Staples and the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. Additional sponsors include Suncoast Schools Federation Credit Union and USF.

To learn how you can support us in "Strides For Education" 5K Walk/Run as a participant, volunteer or sponsor, please call 941-358-4407 or visit www.strides4tampabay.com

About Take Stock in Children

Take Stock in Children is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization with a solid 17 year history of providing mentors, educational scholarships and hope for Florida's low-income and deserving youth. The organization has provided educational support and college scholarships for over 18,000 children in partnership with more than 800 public schools throughout 67 counties in Florida. It is the only scholarship mentoring program that has attained a high school graduation rate of 92 percent in Florida. 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.

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