

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE, IT'S MY PLEASURE TO JOIN YOU FOR THE 19TH ANNUAL BE A VOICE AWARDS LUNCHEON.

NELSON, THANK YOU FOR ALL THE WORK YOU DO AS A VOICE FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE AT THE VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDATION FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO CARE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS.

AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF TODAY'S AWARD WINNERS!

AS A FATHER AND GRANDFATHER, I KNOW THE TREMENDOUS JOY THAT COMES FROM RAISING CHILDREN. THEY'RE MY PRIDE AND JOY.

AS MAYOR, I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN, MAKING SURE THAT THEY CAN GROW UP IN THE BEST POSSIBLE PLACE WITH THE MOST OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL LIVES...

AND THIS INCLUDES ALL CHILDREN IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

ON AVERAGE, FOR MIAMI-DADE AND MONROE COUNTIES, THERE ARE 3,500 CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN FOSTER CARE. 1,600 OF THESE CHILDREN ARE BELOW THE AGE OF FIVE.

ALL THESE CHILDREN DESERVE A VOICE.

THIS IS WHY YOUR PARTICIPATION IN BEING A VOICE FOR THESE AND OTHER CHILDREN IS SO CRUCIAL!

GOING TO COURT CAN BE SCARY FOR ADULTS, SO IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR A CHILD!

BUT FOR THE PAST THREE DECADES, YOU CONTINUE TO FULFILL YOUR MISSION OF MAKING SURE THAT EVERY ABUSED, ABANDONED AND NEGLECTED CHILD IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS A COURT-APPOINTED GUARDIAN AD LITEM...

BECAUSE NO CHILD SHOULD HAVE TO GO TO COURT ALONE.

ON YOUR WEBSITE, THERE IS A TESTIMONY FROM A FOSTER YOUTH WHO SAID THAT HAVING A GUARDIAN AD LITEM WAS "THE GREATEST THING TO HAPPEN IN MY LIFE."

AND THE YOUNG PERSON GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE REASON IS BECAUSE "THERE ARE PEOPLE WITHIN THE SYSTEM WHO ARE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO MAKE SURE THAT A CHILD HAS EVERYTHING HE OR SHE DESERVES ..."

ALL OF YOU ARE WILLING TO DO "WHATEVER IT TAKES" TO MAKE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN BETTER...

AND OUR COMMUNITY IS MADE BETTER BECAUSE OF IT.

THIS IS WHY, ON BEHALF OF THE 2.5 MILLION RESIDENTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY...

IT'S MY PLEASURE TO PRESENT YOU WITH THIS PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDATION HERE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU ALL, AND THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO CARE FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN!