



NEWS RELEASE

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'Portraits of Courage' Luncheon to Celebrate Lives Transformed by Thompson Child & Family Focus

*Eighth Annual Benefit Luncheon, May 11 at The Westin Charlotte
to Raise Awareness and Funds for At-Risk Children and Families*

Charlotte, N.C., May 4, 2009 – More than 600 community leaders, supporters and staff of [Thompson Child & Family Focus](#) will gather on Tues., May 11, to honor the agency's work and pledge support for its continued success. The annual luncheon, "Portraits of Courage," will take place noon-1 p.m. at The Westin Charlotte, 601 S. College St.

Longtime Thompson advocate and former board Chair William W. Neal III will help lead the program and urge continued financial support for the more than 10,000 at-risk children who receive treatment, care and education each year from the nonprofit agency.

The luncheon features a powerful video presentation of three children whose lives – and those of their families – have been transformed by the programs and staff at Thompson.

Kevin, now 28, remembers fondly his two years living at Thompson's St. Peter's Lane residential campus and how it stabilized his childhood, setting him on course for a productive and successful life. Kevin came to Thompson at age 9 after repeated foster care placements following removal from his biological mother's home. Today, he dreams of having a building in his name at Thompson where kids "can just go and play and be themselves."

"I especially want foster kids to be, like, 'He was one of us, and look at him now!' I want them to get that same inspiration."

Kinyada, 25, the single parent of a son diagnosed with autism and a typically developing daughter, marvels at the care and guidance the Thompson Child Development Center staff has given her family. She is grateful that Thompson is with her every step of the way, empowering her to accomplish her educational aspirations and economic independence that will lead her family toward a better future. "There are always people I can talk to here," she says. "Thompson feels like family to me."

And then there is Paige, a severely troubled child who has lived at Thompson's psychiatric residential treatment center at St. Peter's Lane campus since last fall. Paige had suffered years of physical and emotional abuse before being taken in by her grandparents, Viola and Wayne. They had hoped that love and time could undo the damage. "It takes more than that," Viola now realizes. "The staff, the teachers, all of them, especially the therapists, seem like they are just willing to bend over backward to help anyway they can. And, knowing that Paige likes them, that means a lot to us." This summer, Paige will return home, healthier and happier – and better able to move forward toward healing.

The three stories illuminate the broad range of services provided by Thompson, from education to intense treatment; each story underscores Thompson's mission to restore hope and healing for children and families.

Kevin now tries to create for his own son the love he received at Thompson.

Kinyada now dreams of becoming a nurse so she can better provide for her family.

Wayne, Paige's grandfather, now dares to hope that she, too, might have a better life. "I'd love to see Paige happy and successful at whatever she decides she wants to be," he says.

It takes a budget of almost \$13 million and a staff of more than 200 to deliver Thompson's wide range of services. Much of this financial support comes from generous community partners and individual donors.

Thompson is grateful to SPX for its inspirational luncheon leadership gift of \$25,000 and corporate sponsorships provided by the following: \$10,000 – Corporate Benefit Advisors; \$5,000 – Rodgers Builders; \$5,000 – RT Dooley; \$5,000 – USAirways; \$2,500 - First Citizens; \$2,500 – Moore & Van Allen and \$1,000 – BB&T McPhail Bray Insurance.

About Thompson Child and Family Focus

The Episcopal Church founded Thompson Child & Family Focus as an orphanage in 1886. Thompson has evolved into a leading provider of effective clinical and behavioral treatment, developmental education, and proactive care for at-risk children and families. All programs are nationally accredited.

Thompson operates three campuses in the Charlotte region:

- The Saint Peter's Lane Campus in Matthews houses Thompson's psychiatric residential treatment center for children with serious mental illnesses stemming from horrific early childhood traumas, most often involving violent abuse and/or long-term neglect. The program specializes in treating children diagnosed with attachment disorders and related mental-health issues. The campus also houses The School at Thompson for residential children, and the main administration offices.

- The Clanton Road Campus in West Charlotte houses the Thompson Child Development Center, which provides developmental and preventive programming for young children (infant to age 5) and their families, through diverse educational and therapeutic resources. This campus also includes the Early Childhood Services Department, which provides support and mentor relationships for other early-childhood programs across Mecklenburg, Union, and Cabarrus Counties.
- The East 7th Street Campus near uptown Charlotte houses an array of community services including outpatient counseling, foster-care services, school-based intervention therapy, and family education. These services are designed to “wrap around” and support children and families living in the community who still need and benefit from a variety of mental health services.

For more information about Thompson, please visit www.thompsoncff.org.

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