



## **Covenant House Florida Awarded \$25,000 in Disney Grants Support**

Orlando, Fla., March. 26, 2014 — Covenant House Florida recently received \$25,000 from Walt Disney World Resort as part of the company's 2014 Disney Grants program. The organization will use the funding to continue offering a creative life skills curriculum for homeless children in the Central Florida community.

"We are thankful for the commitment that Walt Disney World Resort has shown our youth over the years," said their Executive Director James Gress. "Bright Beginnings is a vital, hands-on life skills program designed to break the cycle of homelessness by meeting the immediate needs of homeless children, while exposing them to age appropriate learning opportunities."

During a recent ceremony at the Orlando Science Center, Covenant House Florida and fellow Central Florida nonprofits and organizations were recognized with Disney Grants support and special *Mousecar* awards. In all, 87 organizations received \$3.8 million in Disney Grants, including 17 groups that were selected based on the strength of the applications they submitted and their alignment with Disney's philanthropic focus.

"We're proud to support Covenant House Florida, which shares our dedication to our community's children and families," said Nancy Gidusko, director of community relations for Walt Disney World Resort. "It's an honor to carry on our company's 42-year commitment to supporting organizations that help make Central Florida an even better place for kids to learn, grow and thrive."

Through the support provided by this signature giving program, Disney Grants will help Central Florida organizations build brighter futures for some 85,000 children in a variety of ways, such as securing food and shelter for families in need, empowering students to write their stories, and kindling a love of music and the arts throughout Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Polk counties.

As a company with nearly 70,000 Cast Members who live and work in Central Florida, Walt Disney World Resort is committed to investing in its community. In addition to annual cash support, Walt Disney World Resort also provided more than \$33 million of in-kind donations to local organizations last year, as well as more than 308,000 volunteer hours through the efforts of Disney VoluntEARS.

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### **About Covenant House Florida**

Covenant House Florida opened in Fort Lauderdale in 1985 and expanded to Orlando in 1995. Since its opening over 25 years ago, the organization has served more than 33,000 teens via street outreach, crisis shelters, transitional housing projects, and walk-in and aftercare services, making it one of the largest private agencies serving runaway and homeless youth in the State of Florida. It is part of an international mission with programs in 21 cities in the United States, Canada, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. The agency relies primarily on support from private individuals and

organizations—not on tax dollars—to meet the multiple and complex needs of homeless youth. For more information about Covenant House Florida, visit [www.covenanthousefl.org](http://www.covenanthousefl.org).

### **About Walt Disney World Resort**

Walt Disney World Resort is a contiguous 40-square-mile, world-class entertainment and recreation center featuring four theme parks (Magic Kingdom Park, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom Park); two water adventure parks (Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon); 35 resort hotels (26 owned and operated by Walt Disney Parks & Resorts includes seven Disney Vacation Club resort properties); 63 holes of golf on four courses; two full-service spas; Disney's Wedding Pavilion; ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex; and Downtown Disney. Walt Disney World Resort is committed to building better futures for children; last year, the company donated more than \$36.5 million in cash and in-kind support to non-profit organizations in Central Florida and Disney VoluntEARS contributed 308,000 hours to community service. Located at Lake Buena Vista, Fla., 20 miles southwest of Orlando, Walt Disney World Resort opened Oct. 1, 1971, and is open daily, year-round. For more information, visit [www.wdwnews.com/about](http://www.wdwnews.com/about)