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JOINT PRESS RELEASE -- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Representative Charlie Crist of the Florida Congressional Coalition Celebrates the Heart Gallery of Pasco and Pinellas as an Angels in Adoption® Honoree To Be Recognized at National Virtual Event in 2020

[CLEARWATER, FL – September 29, 2020] – Representative Charlie Crist will celebrate the Heart Gallery of Pasco and Pinellas, a program of Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services (Gulf Coast JFCS), as a 2020 Angels in Adoption® Honoree for their outstanding advocacy for child adoption. The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), which coordinates the Angels in Adoption® Program, will honor the Heart Gallery of Pasco and Pinellas on September 30 in a virtual gala.

The Heart Gallery of Pasco and Pinellas program is dedicated to finding forever adoptive homes for the hardest to place children, often older children, with disabilities or siblings who desire to remain together. First established in 2006, the organization became a program of Gulf Coast JFCS in 2019 to strengthen its outreach and overall program capabilities. Since its' inception, Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco has placed 365 children and anticipates achieving the 400-child placement benchmark in the months ahead.

The Heart Gallery model for advancing child adoption was first established nearly two decades ago when a professional photographer and an adoption recruiter in New Mexico created the concept of using inspiring portraits of older children and sibling groups who were waiting for adoption. Appropriately named "The Heart Gallery," the model spread nationwide with today more than 80 local programs.

The Angels in Adoption® Program is CCAI's signature public awareness event and provides an annual opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of children and families in the United States and abroad. This year, more than 95 Angels are being honored through the 22nd Annual Angels in Adoption® Program.

"The Angels in Adoption program gives a platform to the families, advocates, and experts who so often serve quietly behind the scenes yet make a huge impact on behalf of children and families. Together with the Adoption Caucus, we are thrilled to shine a light on the extraordinary work of our Angels," said CCAI's Executive Director, Nancy Kay Blackwell.

In addition to the Angel honorees from around the country, CCAI also honors a select number of National Angels in Adoption® whose contributions have had a national impact. The 2020 National Angels are Magnolia Earl & Family (Gerber's 2020 & First Adopted Spokesbaby), Todd Tilghman (adoptive parent and 2020 Winner of The Voice), Miranda & Luke Caldwell (adoptive parents and stars on HGTV's Boise Boys), and This Is Us (award-winning family drama television show with adoption and foster care storylines).

Past National Angels include Muhammad Ali, First Lady Laura Bush, Kristin Chenoweth, Scott Fujita, Deborra-lee Furness, Katherine Heigl and Josh Kelley, Patti LaBelle, Ne-Yo, Rhea Perlman, Shonda Rhimes, Korie and Willie Robertson, Al Roker, Jane Seymour, Sean Anders, Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, Bruce Willis, Nia Vardalos, Bill Klein and Jen Arnold, Scott and Tracie Hamilton, Connie Britton, Rachel Crow, CBS Studios, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, NVIDIA, Hallmark Channel, and PEOPLE Magazine.

CCAI does not receive any government funding and relies on the generous support of foundations, corporations, and individuals to accomplish this mission. The 22nd Annual Angels in Adoption Program is made possible by CCAI's Platinum Partners: Arnold & Porter, Carlson Family Foundation, and Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption; and our Gold Partners: American Council of Life Insurers, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, Casey Family Programs, and Retail Orphan Initiative. To register for the virtual gala on September 30 at 8PM EST, please visit bit.ly/2020angelsgala.

ABOUT CCAI: CCAI is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about children and youth in the United States and around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes. Founded in 2001 by the co-chairs of the bicameral, bipartisan adoption caucus – the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, one of Congress' premier caucuses – CCAI works with the caucus to eliminate policy barriers that hinder children from realizing their basic right of a family and more effectively raise congressional and public awareness about adoption, foster care, and child welfare. For more information, visit www.ccaiinstitute.org.

ABOUT GULF COAST JFCS: Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services (Gulf Coast JFCS) supports diverse individuals and families of all backgrounds through its numerous programs, across 40 Florida counties. Agency values are rooted in the Jewish tradition and include repairing the world, welcoming the stranger, peace, freedom, compassion, charity, respect and truth. Learn more about Gulf Coast JFCS at www.gcjfccs.org.

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