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GREATER ZEPHYRHILLS CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

Press Release

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Chamber Presents \$15,000 to Local Charities & Scholarships

Zephyrhills, FL (March 2, 2015)

The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce presented a combined \$15,000 in donations to local youth groups, civic clubs and scholarships at the Annual "Pigz Pays it Forward Dinner" on Thursday evening. More than 100 attended the dinner held at Alice Hall Community Center. The Chamber hosts the dinner every year to recognize volunteers and sponsors for their contribution to the Chamber's signature event, Zephyrhills Pigz in Z'Hills BBQ & Blues Fest.

As many as 10,000 visitors attended the 5th Annual event held Saturday, January 17th at the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport. "It takes thousands of volunteer service hours to execute an event of that size and scope," noted Vonnie Mikkelsen, Executive Director. "We are fortunate to have a community that embraces volunteer service, and grateful for the enthusiasm by businesses and community organizations that support this event."

Donations were presented to the Pasco County Sheriff's Mounted Posse, Sunshine Swampers 4 x 4 Club, Inc., the YMCA of East Pasco, Zephyr Airport Cadet Squadron, the Zephyrhills High School Drama Club, Zephyrhills High School Interact Club, the Zephyrhills Army JROTC, and the Zephyrhills Museum of Military History. After receiving donations, each group shared how the money would benefit their ongoing efforts to serve. The Chamber announced two new scholarship offerings at the dinner: a

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Performing Arts Scholarship of \$1000 and a Culinary Arts Scholarship of \$1000 both of which will be presented to a graduating Zephyrhills High School student in May at the Scholarship Awards Night. A number of stories were shared by volunteers and sponsors, and the BBQ & Blues Planning Committee modeled T-Shirts with "I Like PIGZ BUCKS & I Cannot Lie" printed in bold letters. Mikkelsen read comments received from the event participants' survey complementing volunteers on their effort. Kathy Whitman of CenterState Bank and Planning Committee member since 2010 was presented with a limited edition commemorative wood cutting board engraved with the event logo and recognized for her outstanding contribution.

The event continues to grow and gain regional recognition and a number of economic impacts were shared with the group. "This is *your* event. This is *your* impact," Mikkelsen told volunteers and supporters.

The dinner program wrapped up with a surprise giveaway for hand-crafted gift bags featuring BBQ rub.

The Zephyrhills Annual Pigz in Z'Hills BBQ & Blues Fest benefits local youth and education programs and community services of the Chamber of Commerce. Its success has allowed the Chamber to "Pay it Forward" with donations to scholarships, youth leadership programs and children's charities every year since its inception.

The 5th Annual Pigz in Z'Hills BBQ & Blues Fest was presented by the Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City of Zephyrhills/Zephyrhills Airport, The Tampa Tribune/TBO.com, Zephyrhills Natural Spring Water, and Mander Law Group, and with Center State Bank, Jarrett Ford, Mosaic, Sonny's BBQ, Hits106, VisitFlorida, Suncoast Credit Union, The Zephyrhills Free Press/Dade City News, The Laker/Lutz News and a number of other fine organizations.

For more information visit ZephyrhillsChamber.org, call (813) 782-1913 or visit our Facebook Page.