



Contact: Jacqueline Hahey
Off Madison Ave
(480) 505-4554
jacquelineh@offmadisonave.com

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SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CEO HONORED WITH GOLDEN HEART AWARD

City of Phoenix Human Services Recognizes Ward For Contributions to Betterment of Children's Lives

PHOENIX (December 17, 2007) – Ginger Ward, founder and CEO of Southwest Human Development, Arizona's largest provider of services for young families and children, was honored with the Golden Heart Award by the City of Phoenix Human Services Department at their Community Recognition Breakfast held Wednesday, Dec. 12.

"Improving the lives of children through our many distinctive programs and services is immensely rewarding, and I am honored to receive the Golden Heart Award in recognition of Southwest Human Development's efforts," said Ginger Ward, CEO, Southwest Human Development. "I would not be where I am today without the aid of hundreds of dedicated Southwest Human Development staff who serve our community each and every day."

The 36th annual Community Recognition Breakfast acknowledged nine Valley individuals, organizations and businesses for their exemplary leadership skills and contributions of services to improve the quality of life for Phoenix residents. The Golden Heart Award is presented to an individual who has become involved in the community and unselfishly made personal sacrifices to help others in need.

Ward was recognized for her work in developing and implementing programs that have significantly impacted the childhood development landscape in Arizona. Under Ward's direction, Southwest Human Development has established a national reputation for being a leader in the fields of early childhood education, mental health, family support and disabilities services and training. She has worked to ensure that Southwest Human Development educates parents, professionals and policy makers about the importance of a child's early development and to implement the programs that support healthy development.

In 2004, Ward founded the Arizona Institute for Early Childhood Development with the mission to expand research-based early development programs to help children reach their full potential. Today, the Institute focuses on three core areas: early literacy, infant mental health and the Birth to Five Helpline.

In addition to her responsibilities with the Institute and Southwest Human Development, Ward sits on a variety of boards and committees charged with forming policy on, and improving services for, children and families. Current positions include the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers; the Arizona State Department of Economic Security Child Care Advisory Committee; the Health Advisory Committee of Children's Action Alliance; the Healthy Families Steering Committee; the Reach Out and Read Advisory Committee; and community advisor to the Junior League. Past positions include the Governor's School Readiness Board and the City of Phoenix Human Services Commission.

About Southwest Human Development

Founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization, Southwest Human Development provides comprehensive services for young children and their families in several areas: child health and welfare, disabilities, Head Start and professional training. Now serving 50,000 children and families each year, Southwest Human Development is the state's largest community-based organization of its type. For more information about Southwest Human Development, please call (602) 266-5976 or visit www.swhd.org.

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