

MEDIA CONTACT:

Richard Pulido
Florida Foster Care Review
Direct. 305-679-2753 | Cell. 305-496-5523
rpulido@fostercarereview.org

For Immediate Release

**Florida Foster Care Review Program Assistant Denise McArthur
Honored with Voices For Children Pathfinder Award**

October 27, 2016 (Miami, FL) – The Florida Foster Care Review team celebrated this past Friday, October 21st as fellow team member Denise McArthur received the 2016 Pathfinder Award at the [22nd Annual Be A Voice Luncheon](#) to benefit the [Voices For Children Foundation, Inc.](#), a Miami not-for-profit advocating for children in foster care. Denise, who spent time in Miami-Dade County's foster care system, worked her way through college and was hired in December 2014 as part-time File Room Assistant at Florida Foster Care Review before being promoted a short year later to full-time Program Assistant.

In accepting the award, [Denise spoke candidly](#) to the nearly 500 guests – including child welfare stakeholders, community leaders, attorneys, judges and elected officials – about how her experiences had shaped her:

“We don’t just open the egg, crack it and eat it. We don’t just eat the stick of butter. We don’t just open the flour and stick it in our mouth. Those things alone, they don’t taste good. But if you take the time to mix them all in a bowl of course with a few other ingredients, the end product is a cake. Tasty, right? Same thing with life. If you get just the right amount of tears, pain, failure, no’s, and mix in just the right amount of laughter, smiles, joy and success, you will enjoy the end product of reaching your destination...,” said Denise.

Through her work at Florida Foster Care Review, Denise demonstrates the devotion the organization's team members have shown to abused and neglected children in our community for over 25 years. Among her duties as Program Assistant, Denise helps with volunteer coordination and training for Florida Foster Care Review's Citizen Review Panel Program, in which specially trained community volunteers examine the cases of children, youth and young adults in foster care to ensure they're safe and receiving the services they need. Denise also helps coordinate the Permanency Roundtable Program, through which Florida Foster Care Review facilitates teams of child welfare stakeholders and community members with one goal – finding lifelong, loving families for children and youth in foster care, one child at a time.

Florida Foster Care Review Executive Director Candice L. Maze, in an interview for a [Voices For Children video](#) made to honor Denise, stated, “The first thing I noticed [when I met Denise]... was that this is one intelligent young woman. As I got to know her through the interview process, and then

eventually through hiring her and working with her, I realized this is one incredibly creative person with a positivity and an outlook on life that truly are admirable.”

Among Florida Foster Care Review staff members, Denise is known for her steadfast optimism and enthusiasm, as well as for her outstanding performances as a spoken word artist and her gift for poetry. Florida Foster Care Review staff members Ileana Albrecht, Melissa Diaz, Marissa Leichter, Melissa Martinez-Esteve and Yani Sanchez attended the luncheon to cheer their teammate and support the work of Voices For Children. Staff members value Denise as one of the best child welfare advocates they know.

The entire Florida Foster Care Review team celebrates Voices For Children’s recognition of Denise. We know that what she can achieve is without limits and are grateful to be part of her journey.

To see the Voices For Children video honoring Denise and featuring Florida Foster Care Review Executive Director Candice Maze, click [HERE](#).

To see Denise’s acceptance speech in its entirety, click [HERE](#).

To read an interview with Denise in Florida Foster Care Review’s January 2016 newsletter, click [HERE](#).

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Established in 1989 by a United Way committee, Florida Foster Care Review recruits and trains community volunteers who review the cases of youth in foster care to ensure they are safe and receiving needed services. Together with child welfare professionals, Florida Foster Care Review also works to ensure that children and youth leaving the foster care system have someone to call family. Whether connecting a child with tutoring, medical care, counseling, transitional housing, or simply the chance to experience normal childhood activities, Florida Foster Care Review has not only improved the lives of abused and neglected children, in some cases it has saved them. This past year, Florida Foster Care Review’s Citizen Review Panel conducted 804 review hearings for 573 children – nearly twice as many as last year. In all its programming, Florida Foster Care Review tracks and analyzes outcomes in order to advocate for system changes that improve children’s lives.