

An Emotional Night: The Children's Trust Champions for Children Awards Ceremony

The Adrienne Arsht Center Knight Concert Hall was filled to the rafters on the night of August 25th, as [The Children's Trust's](#) 11th Annual Champions for Children Awards Ceremony attracted a diverse crowd from throughout the community. The ceremony recognized the fantastic work done across Miami-Dade in service to children and families. The 2016 David Lawrence, Jr. Champion for Children Award went to Michael Duchowny, MD, founder of the pediatric epilepsy program at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. A full event description, along with names of all awardees and sponsors, can be found [here](#).



From left to right: CEO of The Children's Trust Jim Haj and Children's Trust Board Members Miami-Dade County Commissioner Daniella Levine-Cava, Marissa Leichter, Manoucheka Thermitus, Lily de Moya, Laurie Weiss Nuell and Rodester Brandon.

The night wasn't just about awards and speeches; the crowd was treated to incredible performances by a host of young artists. Singers, musicians, dancers, spoken-word poets and documentary filmmakers all graced the stage and blew away everyone in attendance.

The main feeling of the night was one of celebration. Awards were given by prominent members of the community to those who had shown an extra-special commitment to children's well-being. FFCR's own Marissa Leichter, CRP Program Manager and a member of The Children's Trust Board of Directors, was a presenter.

"It was an honor to present the Excellence in Direct Service Award to Amber Wilcox from [Leadership Learning Center](#). I truly think this year's new format at the Arsht Center marked a fresh approach to the Champions for Children Awards Ceremony, and symbolized the leadership of the new CEO Jim Haj."

Although the night was one of celebration, there was pause to recognize victims of gun violence and the many challenges that still face our community. One of the most poignant moments came when 30 young, innocent faces appeared on the hall's huge screen. Each face belonged to a recent victim of gun violence. As the images lingered, the lights were turned on to reveal a line of mourning mothers each holding an image of their child, taken away far too soon. The haunting image is one that is sure to stay in the mind of everyone there, a terrible reminder of the challenges that our community faces.



This was the first time the event had been held at the inspiring Adrienne Arsht Center's Knight Concert Hall, a venue befitting such an important night. Tickets were free, so that anyone in the community could take part.

The evening's awards, entertainment and speeches left the audience in a positive frame of mind about all that has been done to help children and families in our community, while also reminding them of the work that remains. The team at FFCR extends our congratulations to The Children's Trust and all the awardees.