

For Immediate Release

Hephzibah Children's Association Honors Dedicated Volunteers and Donors at 2009 Heart of Gold Ball

March 18, 2009 --- Friends and supporters of Hephzibah Children's Association honored the dedicated volunteers and donors who are critical in helping the organization assist the most vulnerable members of our society. The 2009 Heart of Gold Ball, held on March 7th in the historic Great Hall of Chicago's Union Station, raised over \$200,000, *which will go directly to Hephzibah's innovative programming for abused and neglected children and at-risk families.*

Over 400 people attended the gala which featured live and silent auctions as well as musical entertainment by two bands: Wailin and Soul Cookin'. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and dinner were created and served by Blue Plate Catering. Nikki's Cookies and The Perfect Dinner provided delicious treats for guests.

During dinner, Hephzibah board member Mark Trinkka offered humor and wit in his capacity as Master of Ceremonies. On a serious note, Executive Director, Mary Anne Brown thanked guests for their commitment to Hephzibah during this time of economic hardship when at-risk families are struggling with added challenges and fewer resources to meet them.

Former Hephzibah resident, Brian Fruits presented the Heart of Gold Award to Eric Sorensen accepting on behalf of The John Buck Company. The Heart of Gold Award honors those who have exhibited outstanding personal or professional achievement affecting disadvantaged children. Hephzibah Children's Association was the featured beneficiary of The John Buck Company's 20th annual Spring Fling benefit in June 2008. Over 2,500 guests attended and event proceeds of \$250,000 were raised to fund Hephzibah's innovative educational enrichment programs for abused and neglected children. The John Buck Company (JBC) is an employee-owned firm in Chicago, Ill established in 1981 as a corporate real estate services firm addressing the real estate requirements of corporations, institutions and professional services firms.

The Heart of the Home Award was presented to Jim Van Vliet, Michael Flynn, and Budget-Rent-A-Car/O'Hare for their ongoing, personal involvement and commitment to the children who live in Hephzibah's Group Homes. In addition to spending many hours of their own time with the children, they have organized Budget/O'Hare co-workers to provide volunteers for the Hephzibah Alumni Homecoming, the end of school year Rodeo, dinners and "private showings" of current children's movies. Budget partners Red Robin Restaurants, Bearly Friends, Jimmy Johns, Great American Bagel, K & S Carr Care and the Lake Theatre help supply these services for the children living at Hephzibah Home.

Budget also welcomes and comforts each new child who arrives at Hephzibah with a gift-wrapped teddy bear, dressed in a shirt personalized with the child's name and the message: "I've been waiting here just for you." The Heart of the Home Award honors a volunteer dedicated to Hephzibah's mission with a strong commitment to a particular project or program within the organization.

Hephzibah's Heart of Gold Sponsors honored for their dedication, generosity and support were Park National Bank, Anderson Rasor & Partners, L.L.P., The John Buck Company, McCarthy & Trinka, Water Tower Realty & the Karris family, in addition to a generous anonymous donor.

Hephzibah's Oak Park Auxiliary once again organized an incredible silent and live auction with over one-hundred different packages for guests to bid on. Proceeds from the Heart of Gold Ball help Hephzibah provide critical services that enhance the lives of children and families through our group homes, foster care, family support services and school-age day care programs. Thank you to all who made this event a stellar success!

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