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FKCC Provides Holiday Cheer to Children of Challenged Students

Key West, FL, December 2, 2009—Throughout the year, Florida Keys Community College’s Office of Financial Aid helps hundreds of students obtain the financial support they need to achieve their educational goals. But this time of year, FKCC goes beyond monetary support to provide holiday cheer to the children of a special student population who are overcoming a variety of academic challenges. This Friday, December 4, 2009, the college will host its eighth annual Holiday Party for RAVE students and their families in the Library of the Key West campus from 5:00p.m. to 7:00p.m.

RAVE, an acronym for **R**enewing and **A**dvancing **T**hrough **V**ocational **E**ducation, is a federally-funded program that provides financial assistance to 15 FKCC students. All are pursuing Associate of Science degrees, despite certain disadvantages that often get in the way of achieving an education, such as having a learning disability, being a single parent, a displaced homemaker, or a non-native English speaker. Many of these students also work multiple jobs are raising young children. Combine that with final exams, and the holiday season can be a stressful time of year.

“The purpose of the Holiday Party is to allow the students to let loose and enjoy a free festivity with their families,” says Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Tania Keller, who coordinated this year’s event. “The RAVE students look forward to this every year.”

Activities planned for the event include holiday crafts and gift-making, games, and a bounce house. The highlight of the evening will, of course, be a visit from Santa Claus and his elf. Each child will get a chance to share their Christmas wishes with Santa and will receive a present.

Much community generosity goes into producing the party every year. Many local businesses, including Finnegan’s Wake, Big John’s Pizza, and Albertson’s provide food. Imagination Station, Border’sm Denny’s, Goldman’s Bagel Deli, Bella Mia and Key West Haircuts contributed gift certificates and other items that will be raffled as door prizes. Also, gifts for the children are donated by FKCC employees.

“This event fosters a family-oriented atmosphere that is very important to the success of this special population of students in the Keys,” says Financial Aid Director Susan Urban. “FKCC employees get involved too. They bring their own children and we all celebrate our students’ accomplishments and the spirit of the season together.”

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