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For Love of Children's 2006 Year End Recognition Ceremony

Washington, D.C. (June 22, 2006) -- *For Love of Children's* impact on the community shone brightly on Wednesday night, June 21, at All Souls Unitarian Church, when students of FLOCC's Neighborhood Tutoring Program and Educational Guidance Program, along with tutors and community partners were recognized for their individual and collective successes.

The keynote speech was given by **WJLA News Anchor Leon Harris**, who is a member of the FLOCC board. Mr. Harris spoke directly to the young people, encouraging them to work to overcome the many obstacles and negative forces they face – as he did – growing up, and reminding them that they can achieve anything they put their minds to. **D.C. City Councilmember Jim Graham** was present as well. Mr. Graham read a resolution from the council declaring June 21 "For Love of Children Day."

Mayra Sarceño-Ortiz was celebrated at FLOCC's Year End Recognition Ceremony for being –this year –the first student to have completed the Neighborhood Tutoring Program and then to have continued onward to receive her college degree.

Mayra grew up in a home where English was a second language. She joined NTP to help improve her grammar and reading skills. Having such a positive experience during elementary school, Mayra returned to participate in the Neighborhood Teen Tutoring Program. Then, from a desire to give back to the FLOCC community, Mayra returned during high school to be a FLOCC tutor. She graduated from high school with honors and was accepted to Marymount University. There she studied interior design and graduated this spring with honors.

Following in Mayra's footsteps are 12 students that have just graduated from local high schools and plan on attending college in the fall. The high school graduates are: **Akosua Akoto** (Howard University), **Unique Bexley** (Grinnell College), **Amalia Cepero** (Trinity Washington University), **Jenai Davis** (Morgan State University), **Dominic Gasaway** (University of Maryland, Baltimore County), **Nicole Havis** (Old Dominion University), **Chioma Iwuoha** (Lafayette College), **Justina Jackson** (Saint Augustine's College), **Lloydisha Mason** (Virginia Union University), **Shakira Thomas** (Trinity Washington University), **Shanelle Thompson** (Paine College) and **Tiffany Tyree** (Bennett Beauty Institute).

The “Senior of the Year Award” was presented to **Nicole Havis**. Nicole has attended FLOC programs since elementary school, beginning with the Neighborhood Tutoring Program. Since then, she has attended cultural educational workshops,

SAT prep programs, college tours, and senior workshops. Nicole has spent time volunteering at FLOC for the “Help the Homeless Walk” and attended summer camp at the Outdoor Education Center. Nicole will be attending Old Dominion University in the fall and plans on majoring in Biology. With this degree, she would like to become a medical researcher with a focus in genetics.

The “Student of the Year Award” was presented to **Alicia Williams**. Alicia has been part of NTP for four years; this past year she joined the Neighborhood Teen Tutoring Program. Her transition into the adolescent program was seamless and her desire to learn has continued to grow. Alicia is currently deciding which high school to attend this fall.

Lenny Byrd was recognized for his tremendous progress this past semester by receiving the “Growing Leader Award.” Lenny regularly sets an example for others by taking initiative and being both caring and generous. Lenny recently enrolled in FLOC’s programs this past February. He is currently involved in Leaders in the Making, as well as the Wednesday Adolescent Math Program.

Seven students from the Neighborhood Tutoring Program received the “Exceptional Student Award.” This included: **Dazhon Hall** from Ross Elementary School, **Alphonso Nelson** from Shaw Elementary School, **Bernard Hannibal** and **Katrice Starnes** from Garrison Elementary School, **Rory Bush** and **Thomas Lewis** from the Wednesday Adolescent Math Program, and **Charnee Haigler** from the Saturday Morning Tutorial Program.

Two other awards were presented to FLOC contributors. The “Roll Away the Stone Award” was given to **City Year Washington, D.C.** City Year Washington, D.C. is a non-profit organization that supplies tutors to the FLOC after school programs at Garrison and Ross Elementary Schools. The “Volunteer of the Year Award” was presented to tutor **Michael O’Neil**. Michael has been an outstanding volunteer for the Neighborhood Tutoring Program for seven years.

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For Love of Children is a Washington, D.C. non-profit that, since 1965, has been at the center of the movement that challenged the city’s response to the needs of our most vulnerable children and families. Today, FLOC’s mission is centered squarely on education. FLOC provides demonstrably effective out-of-school educational services targeted to children at risk for educational failure. FLOC programs include: the *Neighborhood Tutoring Program*, a proven back-to-basics curricula in reading and math; *Educational Guidance*, counseling to support youth through post-secondary education; and the 350-acre *Outdoor Education Center*, FLOC’s wilderness site in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where at-risk youth go for environmental science, experiential/challenge, and adventure education.