

For Immediate Release  
Contact Kelly French, First Step, 552-2065  
Tonya Gowan, Forty Carrots Family Center, 416-2601

**Forty Carrots Family Center wins "Caring Kids Organization of the Year" from First Step Mother's & Infants Program**

Supporting First Step of Sarasota's Mothers & Infants program, the sixth annual Caring Hearts Luncheon will be held at Michael's On East on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 11:30 am.

Mothers & Infants provides a safe, supportive environment for pregnant women with substance abuse issues where they can begin a life of recovery while also gaining parenting, educational and vocational skills. Since the program began in 1995, more than 215 healthy, drug-free babies have been born.

This year's event will honor Sandi Stewart, the Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of Gulf Coast Florida, Inc., as the Caring Hearts "Mom of the Year." Part of the Girl Scout movement for more than 20 years, Sandi has served as a volunteer, finance director and CEO. Under her stewardship, the Girl Scouts of Gulf Coast has seen a 25 percent increase in girl membership.

In addition, the first annual "Caring Kids Organization of the Year" award will be presented to Forty Carrots Family Center. Founded by Betsy Kane-Hartnett and Diane Weiss, Forty Carrots provides early childhood development and parenting education to thousands of families each year. It focuses on nurturing and building the relationships between parents and their children. Courses offer knowledge from bedtime techniques and feeding routines to understanding common stresses and frustrations that no parent is expected to know from the start. Forty Carrots Family Center offers over 77 opportunities to help families grow stronger in our community.

As in years past, one of the highlights of the luncheon program will be the presentation given by a recent alumnae on how her life has been changed based on the time spent in Mothers & Infants. This year will be no different as recent alumnae – Kelly – shares her story.

For reservations or more information about the Caring Hearts Luncheon, contact Kelly French at 552-2065 or visit First Steps website at [www.fsos.org](http://www.fsos.org) and select the special events page. For information about Forty Carrots Family Center visit [www.fortycarrots.org](http://www.fortycarrots.org) or call 365-7716.