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Florida School Choice Fund Named Social Capitalist Award Finalist
Organization recognized for creative approach to education issues

TAMPA, Fla., January 24, 2006 – The Florida School Choice Fund (FSCF), the innovative Tampa-based organization that works to empower parents to choose a school that best meets their child’s needs, was named as one of the finalists in the 2006 Fast Company/Monitor Group Social Capitalist Awards. The third annual Social Capitalist Awards is a joint effort by Fast Company and Monitor Group to find the most creative and entrepreneurial organizations in the social sector. The Florida School Choice Fund was selected from 278 nominations.

The Social Capitalist Awards honor non-profit organizations, or “social entrepreneurs,” across the nation that use the disciplines of the corporate world to address today’s most challenging social problems. The judging panel consisted of 43 experts in fields ranging from international development to human rights to education reform. Finalists were selected based on: social impact, aspiration and growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainability.

“We are pleased to receive recognition from outstanding organizations such as Fast Company and the Monitor Group,” said John Kirtley, founder and president of the Florida School Choice Fund. “We hope that our organization inspires others to join us in giving educational options for low-income parents, improving the educational system, and creating a brighter future for our children.”

The Florida School Choice Fund (FSCF) was founded to empower low-income parents as consumers by enabling them to choose an environment that best suits their children’s individual needs. FSCF’s goal is to improve Florida’s K-12 educational system by advancing public policy that empowers parents to choose the school that best meets their child’s learning needs.

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The concept was put into action at the end of 2001, when the Florida legislature approved the Corporate Tax Credit (CTC) Scholarship program, allowing companies to redirect up to 75 percent of their state corporate income tax payments, at no cost, to state approved scholarship programs that help low-income parents send their children to a private school of their choice, or to pay for transportation to an out-of-district public school. Participating corporations receive a 100 percent tax credit for every dollar they donate.

Under FSCF, Step Up For Students, an initiative of the CTC Scholarship Program, provides K-12 scholarships in the amount of up to \$3,500 for private tuition or \$500 for transportation. Only families that qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program are eligible to receive scholarships. The typical scholarship family has an average income of \$22,074 for a family of four, and more than half of the scholarship families are single-parent homes. There are currently 14,000 children on the program.

Launched in 1995 by two former Harvard Business Review editors, *Fast Company* magazine highlights the creative workers and organizations that are building the future, and offers reader insight on creating new products, new services and new ways of doing business. Visit <http://www.fastcompany.com> for more information. The Monitor Group is a family of professional services firms, linked by shared ownership, management philosophy and knowledge assets. Each entity in Monitor's global network is dedicated to providing products and services that fundamentally enhance the competitiveness of its clients. Visit <http://www.monitor.com> for more information.

The judging panel for the Fast Company/Monitor Group Social Capitalist Awards chose 25 winners among the finalists. As a finalist, the Florida School Choice Fund will be featured on Fast Company's website in hopes of inspiring other companies to become more innovative. The Florida School Choice Fund's profile, as well as a complete list of the finalists and award winners, can be found at www.fastcompany.com.

The Step Up For Students Scholarship program provides K-12 scholarships that allow 14,000 low-income Florida students to attend a private school or out-of-district public school. Since its inception, Step Up For Students has raised over \$200 million for CTC Scholarships. The program is capped at \$88 million per year with available tax credits approved on a first-come, first-served basis. For information on how to participate in the program, please visit www.StepUpForStudents.com or call (800) 782-9140.

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