



Contact:
Tiffany Smith, The Firefly Group
(w) 772-287-5272
tiffany@fireflyforyou.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Martin County Healthy Start Coalition's Sixth Annual *Dancing with the Martin Stars* raises more than \$167,000 – setting a new fundraising record - to benefit women and newborns in Martin County

STUART, Fla. – Martin County Healthy Start Coalition's annual *Dancing with the Martin Stars* has once again charmed audiences, built upon its continued success and reached a new fundraising record. On September 24, nine exceptionally talented and inspiring community stars and their partners entertained a sold out crowd at the Lyric Theatre. This group of brave and dedicated dancers collectively raised more than \$167,000 to benefit the pregnant women and newborns in Martin County who are served by Healthy Start, and funds continue to roll in even after the event.

Libby Flippo and her dance partner Bob Murray were the overall winners and received the coveted mirror ball trophy for being the top fundraiser - raising more than \$40,000 as well as achieving a score of 28 from the judges for their exceptional version of the Argentine tango that wowed the crowd and impressed the judges.

If that wasn't impressive enough, this year two dancers broke *Dancing with the Martin Stars* all time individual fundraising efforts - Libby Flippo and Julia Sansevere.

"Healthy families mean healthy communities. I have witnessed firsthand, in my healthcare career, how powerful knowledge acquisition, coordination of care and access to resources can be. Healthy Start gives mothers and newborns in our community the opportunity to have healthy starts. And that is why raising funds for this organization has been so important to me," said Libby Flippo, Sr. Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer at Martin Health System. "I am humbled by this experience and still shocked that I was this year's overall Dancing with the Martin Stars winner. I am grateful to everyone who supported me throughout this process."

Three of the dance duos received perfect scores from the judges for their performances. The winners included Helen Martin and her partner Travis Stancil for their original contemporary dance, Shaun Kelly and her partner Craig Galvin for their high energy foxtrot/west coast swing, and Jeff Teach and Holly Perle for their alluring rhumba.

“We are appreciative beyond words to our community stars for dedicating their time and energy to this very important cause - and to our professional dancers, sponsors, and the hundreds of people who came out to support them,” said Scott Berry, Executive Director of the Martin County Healthy Start Coalition. “As a result of their hard work and perseverance, Healthy Start will be able to underwrite the costs of serving 300 women in our community. That is equivalent to 25 percent of all women giving birth in the coming year.”

All of the funds raised through ***Dancing with the Martin Stars*** are directed towards Healthy Start services and programs such as prenatal care, ultrasounds, lab testing, and providing high-risk mothers with the specialized care they need. To date, ***Dancing with the Martin Stars*** has raised nearly \$630,000 to support this mission.

About the Dancers

Nine Martin County dancers competed with professional dance partners in this year’s ***Dancing with the Martin Stars***. They included: Casey Cass, President of CASCO Tools, Inc. with Marianella Tobar of Marianella’s Dance Fusion, LLC; Libby Flippo, Sr. Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer at Martin Health System with Bob Murray of Blana Dance - Neuvo Milanga; Shaun Kelly, Owner of Perfectly Legal Office Solutions, LLC with Craig Galvin of Craig’s Dance Studio; Andrea Levy, Owner of Lotus Loft with Travis Scott, Independent Instructor; Helen Martin, President/Owner of Stretch Zone Treasure Coast with Travis Stancil, Independent Instructor; Troy McDonald, City of Stuart Commissioner with Kristin Vennos of The Crystal Ballroom; Julia Sansevere, Realtor for Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate with Elliott Acosta of The Treasure Coast Hustle Association; Jeff Teach, President of Teach Wealth Management, Inc. with Holly Perle, Professional Dance Competitor; and Dewey Vinaya, Military Veteran with Faith Mary-Angela, Independent Instructor.

Lead sponsorship support was provided by Martin Health System with other major sponsorships from: David Brudy, Ferreira Construction Co.; Kidz Medical Services; Martin Health Foundation; Matthew Thompson; and Visiting Nurses Association of Florida.

About Martin County Healthy Start Coalition

Martin County Healthy Start Coalition is a community-based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that offers support and education to pregnant women and infants. Prenatal and infant health screenings, childbirth education, counseling services, prenatal care and parenting education classes are available to families to ensure that all babies are born healthy. All information provided to Healthy Start is kept confidential. Eligibility for services is based on the presence of risk to the health of the mother or infant, not on income level. Martin County Healthy Start is supported by the Florida Department of Health, the Children's Services Council of Martin County, the United Way of Martin County, and the Hobe Sound Community Chest.

For more information about the Martin County Healthy Start Coalition call 772-463-2888 or visit mchealthystart.org. Connect with Martin County Healthy Start Coalition on Facebook at facebook.com/MCHealthyStart.

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Suggested Photo Caption: The cast of the 2016 *Dancing with the Martin Stars* (pictured from left to right) (first row) Kristin Vennos, Travis Stancil, Travis Scott, (second row) Shaun Kelly, Andrea Levy, Helen Martin, Libby Flippo, Holly Perle, Faith Mary-Angela, Julia Sansevere, Marianella Tobar, (third row) Craig Galvin, Troy McDonald, Bob Murray, Jeff Teach, Dewey Vinaya, Elliott Acosta and Casey Cass.

Suggested Photo Caption: The overall winner of the 2016 *Dancing with the Martin Stars* Libby Flippo and her partner Bob Murray dancing the Argentine tango.