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'Power of the Purse' nets \$340K for Women's Fund Miami-Dade

BY DEBORAH KORGE

The Women's Fund Miami-Dade's signature event, 2016 "Power of the Purse" Luncheon and Auction, on Thursday, Apr. 7, in the BankUnited Center at the University of Miami, raised over \$340,000 for women and girls served in Miami-Dade County.

Businesswoman and fashion icon Elle Macpherson returned as honorary event chair and Teresa Rodriguez, television anchor and author, served as emcee for the emotionally powerful program showcasing the work of the 23-year-old organization. Nearly 800 South Florida leaders, philanthropists, government officials and supporters attended.

Luncheon co-chairs Mary Young and Sissy DeMaria, Honor Roll chair Joann Soman and returning auction chair and board member Cyndi Hibnick, along with a spectacular luncheon committee, celebrated the power of women and girls to create change in our community.

"When the Brains and Beauty Girls Club opened the event by asking, 'When you look in the mirror, who do you see?,' the stage for a gathering of almost 800 guests was set," DeMaria said. "We all saw those who were honored for making our community a better place for women and girls: our honorees Hillarie Bass, Darlene Perez, Lucia Davis-Raiford and Natacha Munilla. Most importantly we saw a 'mirror' of Miami's women committed to empowering and enabling other women."

Hilarie Bass, co-president of Greenberg Traurig and incoming American Bar Association president was presented with the Marilyn Gladstone Lifetime Achievement Award for not only her support of the Women's Fund but for her ongoing pro bono efforts to improve the quality of life for women and children in Miami-Dade County. In addition, community leaders Lucia Davis-Raiford, Natacha Munilla and Darlene Perez were inducted into the annual Honor Roll for their important work to empower women and girls and for supporting the efforts of The Women's Fund.



Pictured (l-r) are Marilyn March, executive director; Cyndi Hibnick, Silent Auction chair; Elle Macpherson, honorary event chair; Sissy DeMaria, event co-chair, and Mary Young, event co-chair.



Pictured (l-r) are Marilyn Gladstone, founder of The Women's Fund Miami-Dade; Hunter Reno; Marilyn March, executive director, and Claudia Kitchens.

"With a guiding principle of over two decades of leadership, integrity and inclusion, the Women's Fund Power of the Purse lunch assembled a diverse crowd who heard one young woman's story of overcoming homelessness by refusing to be hopeless," Young said.

"Changing lives daily through awareness and advocacy was celebrated with passion and purpose, uniquely this year, by assembling a basketball court of women and men cheering on the good works that that day's proceeds will enable," she added.

"For 23 years, we have been the voice of women and girls in our community. The voices of our speakers Kendrika King of Educate Tomorrow and emcee Teresa Rodriguez who told about overcoming adversity and rising to the challenges that were presented to them were very moving and became a call to action for so many of our guests," said executive director Marilyn March. "To meet that call, we will continue to make sure the Women's Fund is here to help women and girls face these challenges and come out stronger. Teresa's and Kendrika's stories brought our guests to tears and to their feet."

Educate Tomorrow is a current grantee partner of the Women's Fund. The group supports youth aging out of foster care in Miami-Dade through education, mentoring and life skills training.

For more information about the Women's Fund Miami-Dade, call 305-441-0506 or visit <www.womensfundmiami.org>.