



**For Immediate Release**

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## **HILLSBOROUGH EDUCATION FOUNDATION WELCOMES TWO MORE COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

(September 16, 2009) TAMPA – During the quarterly meeting of the Hillsborough Education Foundation Board of Directors on Wednesday, September 16, the organization officially welcomed John Kirtley of Step Up for Students and Joel K. Stephens of Thomas Financial Group to its membership.

Kirtley is the current chairman of Step Up for Students, the nonprofit organization that oversees the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program, and the Florida School Choice Fund. In the past eight years, more than 100,000 low-income students have benefited from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship. Through the Florida School Choice Fund, thousands of low-income families throughout Florida have received assistance to pursue alternate educational opportunities. Kirtley began his work in education in 1998 when he formed the Children’s Scholarship Fund of Tampa Bay. Through this fund, low-income children received privately funded scholarships to attend the K-8 school of their choice.

Stephens specializes in life insurance planning with Thomas Financial Group, where he has been employed for 15 years. He also sits on the Board of Directors for the Tampa Bay Estate Planning Council, and is an active member of many industry organizations. Stephens’ community work includes serving on the Planned Giving Committees for the Hillsborough Education Foundation and the American Red Cross. As a past Chairman of The Tampa Connection he impacted multiple area non-profits, including: Teaching Tools for Hillsborough Schools, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, and the Children’s Home.

“The Hillsborough Education Foundation has been successful over its 21-year history due to the outstanding board members and other community volunteers who give generously of their time,” said Hillsborough Education Foundation President Bill Hoffman, “We are very pleased that Joel and John have joined our board and our efforts in improving student achievement in our community.”

Kirtley and Stephens join 30 other community and business leaders on the Foundation’s Board of Directors. For more information about the Hillsborough Education Foundation visit [www.educationfoundation.com](http://www.educationfoundation.com).

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### **Information on Hillsborough Education Foundation, Inc:**

The Hillsborough Education Foundation is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization whose mission is to invest community resources to help students achieve academic success. The Foundation, now celebrating 20 years of serving the students, teachers and schools in our community has invested more than \$69 million for enhancement of education. The Foundation annually raises over \$5 million and fulfills its mission via programs such as College, Career & Technical Scholarships, Teaching Tools for Hillsborough Schools, Take Stock in Children Mentoring, School Enrichment, and Excellence in Education programs as well as other resource programs to benefit those we serve.