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Media Alert: Empty Bowls Gala on Nov. 14 to Raise Funds for Childhood Hunger Relief

Lakeland – While many of us plan to fill our tables with food this Thanksgiving, one in six people will struggle to put food on the table today. For children, the effects of hunger are devastating to their development. In Polk County, one in four students is at risk of hunger.

You can offer support to children facing hunger and raise the funds needed to provide food for their empty bowls by attending the Empty Bowls Gala to support Agape Food Bank, the leading hunger relief agency in Lakeland. For over 30 years Agape has provided nutritious food and transformed lives through innovative programming, education, and hunger advocacy. One hundred percent of net proceeds from the Empty Bowls Gala will be directed to Agape Food Bank's childhood nutrition programs.

The event features a live and silent auction of a variety of ceramic bowls and other works that have been hand painted, signed and donated by local art and community leaders. These leaders include Rocky Bridges of Harrison School for the Arts, 2015 Florida State Teacher of the Year Christie Bassett, Carol Hughes of Arts Ensemble Education Foundation, Isaac Knight of Florida Highwaymen, Senator Kelli Stargel, State Representative Colleen Burton, City of Bartow Vice Mayor Trish Burdin-Pfeiffer, Lakeland Ledger Editor Lenore DeVore and CEO and President of United Way of Central Florida Alan Turner.

More than just works of art, these "empty bowls" serve as a reminder of the more than 100,000 children, seniors and family members in Polk County who struggle to put food on the table every day.

At the event The Mosaic Company will receive the "Champion Against Hunger" award for outstanding efforts to alleviate hunger.

This award was established by Catholic Charities of Central Florida to recognize individuals and organizations who have made a direct impact on hunger relief services in the state of Florida.

"The Mosaic Company has been an incredible support to Catholic Charities – donating a truck to our mobile food pantry program and volunteering to pack backpacks of food for our SmilePak weekend meal program for hungry children," said Kim Long, Director of Agape Food Bank. "We are pleased to present this award to The Mosaic Company for their dedication as an organization to help those in need in our community."

The Empty Bowls Gala will take place on November 14, 2015 at Polk State College in Lakeland. For event registration and to view some of the artwork for auction, visit: <http://www.cflcc.org/empty-bowls-gala>. For more information, contact Agape Food Bank at 863-665-7074.

The Agape Food Bank, a program of Catholic Charities of Central Florida, is a food distribution warehouse in Lakeland, Florida serving nearly two hundred non-profit partner agencies in Polk, Highlands and Hardee counties. It is part of the national Feeding America Food Bank network and is the only designated USDA approved provider serving the tri-county region. Their vision is that 100% of the hungry population in the community has access to an adequate supply of nutritious food. Their mission is to lead the fight to end hunger in the community by providing nutritious food and transforming lives through innovative programming, education, and hunger advocacy. The mission of Catholic Charities of Central Florida is to provide vital social services for people in need regardless of their religious, social, or economic background, to improve lives of individuals, families and the community.