

## For Immediate Release

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### *Event Raises \$14,200 to Kick-Off Healthy Start's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday!*

Fort Myers, FL, March 23, 2016—The Boots & Bling riverboat fundraising event raised more than \$14,200 and helped kick-off Healthy Start's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The fun-filled evening included celebrity MC's Amanda Hall and Chris Cifatte from WINK news, DJ Gentry Thomas, country western dancing and lessons, BBQ dinner, great auction items, and games such as BINGO, 52-Card Draw, Heads or Tails, and much more!

This year's event was extra special because it was the kick-off for Healthy Start's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Healthy Start's goals are to prevent infant deaths and low birth weight babies, and promote health and developmental outcomes for young children. The infant mortality rate in Southwest Florida (Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties) has decreased 47% since the program began.

Investing in programs that promote a healthy start in life is important because a healthy start lasts a lifetime! Babies who are born healthy are more likely to be ready for school and succeed in school, and less likely to end up in the juvenile justice system. If you missed the event, you can see the pictures and make a donation at [www.HealthyStartBaby.org](http://www.HealthyStartBaby.org).

Healthy Start Southwest Florida is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) serving Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties. We provide education and support to new parents and families with young children. We help ensure families have access to needed medical care, parenting, health education, developmental and behavioral screenings, and other services to help give their child a Healthy Start in life.

Last year, **Healthy Start served more than 14,000** pregnant women, babies and young children who were at higher risk for poor health outcomes. More than **95 cents of every dollar received went to services in our local community**. For more info, please go to [www.HealthyStartBaby.org](http://www.HealthyStartBaby.org)

#### Attached:

Photo 1—Chris Cifatte, Amanda Hall, Stephen Eller

Photo 2—Rose Marie and Ray Healy

Photo 3—Vick Greene and Samantha Thomas

Photo 4—Amanda Hall, Cheryl Gonzalez, Barbara Melvin, Shelly Aristizabal, Chris Cifatte, Glennis Carter

Photo 5—Jenna Champion, Laurie Champion, Kaley Champion, Mireille Tamie

Photo 6—Nadja Lieberwirth

Healthy Start Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc.

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