



For immediate release:
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ATLANTA (March 9, 2009) – Tough economic times are putting a strain on families and the child care services they use in Georgia, and a group of concerned citizens led by Quality Care for Children and philanthropist Stephanie Blank is hoping a major fundraising event in April will bring more money and awareness to what has become an urgent and growing problem this year.

Blank, a passionate children’s advocate who chairs the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation board and is the wife of Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank, is hosting QCC’s third annual El Día de los Niños fundraising event on Thursday, April 23, at the W Hotel in Buckhead. The Latin-themed fundraising party is part of a nationally recognized day created to “honor and celebrate all children—who represent the hopes and dreams of every community.” It will feature a high-end silent auction, interactive entertainment, and imaginative ethnic foods and cocktails. A limited number of tickets are still available.

“We’re urging people to visit www.qualitycareforchildren.org to join us, to donate, or become involved in the work of ensuring kids have the quality care they need early in life, particularly now, in these difficult times,” Blank said. “El Dia de los Ninos is a fun and celebratory event, but we can’t forget its very serious intent, which is to raise the critical dollars needed to connect more families with quality child care in Georgia.”

A recent QCC survey found that 86 percent of child care centers in a 36-county area covering Northwest Georgia, metro Atlanta and Central Georgia are now reporting higher than normal vacancies triggered by the economic downturn. With unemployment high, QCC also found that parents who can no longer afford licensed, high-quality care are increasingly turning to lower-cost alternatives, such as unlicensed caregivers, where there

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is neither a guarantee of a safe environment or a high likelihood that a child's early learning needs are being properly supported.

“Right now, many families are overwhelmed by what’s happened with the economy and they’re struggling to make difficult financial choices,” Blank said. “We simply can’t in good conscience allow quality child care to deteriorate, particularly now during these tough times. There are no do-overs with kids. We only get one shot at raising them, giving them the proper care and the access to learning they need in their early formative years.”

“QCC has been helping working mothers and child care providers in Atlanta’s neighborhoods for more than 30 years,” said QCC Chief Executive Officer Pam Tatum. “This may prove to be the most challenging yet for the families we serve, and we need to do everything we can to be there for them now, and help them through these turbulent times.”

Quality Care for Children (www.qualitycareforchildren.org) is Georgia’s leader in equipping parents and child care providers with the tools they need to receive and provide high quality, affordable child care so that all children have access to superior early learning experiences and are ready for school.

El Día de los Niños
Thursday, April 23, 2009
7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
The W Hotel in Buckhead