



## Media Release

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### For Immediate Release

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### TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN LAUNCHES MAJOR EXPANSION OF ITS PROGRAM IN SUWANNEE COUNTY FOR 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

**JACKSONVILLE, FL** (September 13, 2022) – In conjunction with the start of the school year, Take Stock In Children recently announced a major expansion in Suwannee County. Through a partnership between Goodwill of North Florida and the Suwannee Education Foundation, the program kicks off with 24 students and mentors already enrolled.

The Suwannee Education Foundation (SEF) has been operating the Take Stock in Children program since 1995 serving over 116 high school graduates, 40 college graduates, and 22 current students and supporting the investment of over \$280,000 in scholarships. But with the new Goodwill of North Florida partnership, the program is expected to double from 24 students to 50 by 2025.

For more than 20 years, Take Stock in Children of Duval County has been changing the lives of deserving (or under-served) children by combining in-school support through a college success coach, the promise of a college or vocational school tuition scholarship and most importantly the guidance of a caring mentor. In 2017, the program expanded into Putnam County.

“We are so happy to expand Take Stock in Children in Suwannee County. It is a truly life-changing program. We’re giving students the promise of a guaranteed pathway to post-secondary education, and it is proven to help reduce dropout rates,” said David Rey, CEO of Goodwill of North Florida. “Take Stock in Children along with Goodwill invites local businesses and community organizations in Suwannee to be part of Take Stock by volunteering as mentors.”

Take Stock In Children in Suwannee was made possible through SEF. SEF provides support, funding and education services for students and teachers in Suwannee County Public Schools.

“We are so grateful for the funding from Goodwill, and to have an additional partner to help support our students,” said Lori Evans, Executive Director of SEF. “Collaborative partnerships are the only way to do this work. Life is so complicated and our students, their families and our teachers need support. Together with Goodwill, The Suwannee Education Foundation is going to be able to recruit more students for the Take Stock in Children program as well as launch new programs to serve Suwannee County residents.”

The funds donated by Goodwill are matched dollar-for-dollar by Florida Prepaid to provide scholarships for participants and fund a full-time Success Coach. Lesley Fry, a 30-year veteran of Suwannee County School District as a teacher, fills the newly created role.

For more information on the program or to find out about volunteer opportunities, please visit <https://seffoundation.org/>.

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**About Goodwill Industries of North Florida, Inc.**

Goodwill Industries of North Florida, Inc. is the area's largest not-for-profit organization specializing in job training and placement services for individuals with barriers to employment. Ninety two cents of every dollar generated is directly invested in our programs and services. For more information please visit [www.goodwilljax.org](http://www.goodwilljax.org).

**About Take Stock In Children**

Take Stock in Children was founded in response to persistent high school dropout rates among Florida's most under-resourced youth. Research has increasingly shown that low-income students are less successful academically than their higher income peers due to the constraints of living in poverty.

**About Suwannee Education Foundation (SEF)**

Suwannee Education Foundation (SEF) provides support, funding and educational services for students and teachers in Suwannee County Public Schools. SEF does this by garnering resources, nurturing partnerships and leveraging support for programs such as Mini-Grants for Teachers, BRIDGES to Career and College Readiness, Scholarships, Suwannee Teacher of the Year, Take Stock in Children, and Youth Leadership.