



Paul Crane / News Chief

Award recipients, Ilah Frazier, Virginia Snively Award; Lori Waters, Julie Pope Award; Suzanne Moraco, George Jenkins Award; and Joy Barranco, Ralph and Alice Thompson Award; talk following the Girls Inc. of Winter Haven She Knows Where She's Going Luncheon held Thursday at the Chain of Lakes Complex in Winter Haven.

Girls Inc. honors women at banquet

By TRACIE WELSER
News Chief Correspondent

Colorful tablecloths and centerpieces lit up the sold-out banquet hall of the Chain of Lakes Complex on Thursday for the Girls Inc. of Winter Haven Celebration Luncheon. This year's gathering, its 20th annual, was held in honor of four Girls Inc. "She Knows Where She's Going" award winners, and the theme, "Developing Future Leaders," was exemplified by smiling community leaders interacting with enthusiastic students from Girls Inc.

Peggy Threlkel, executive director of Girls Inc., said the luncheon highlights community service and brings girls from the center in contact with community leaders whose lives are examples of professional success and philanthropy. As part of the award process, each honoree spent time prior to the luncheon mentoring girls at Girls Inc.

Bonnie Parker, city president of Sun Trust Bank, member of the USF Polytechnic board of trustees and Girls Inc. volunteer, presided over the festivities. Parker said, "At Girls Inc. we specialize in girls. We provide the tools girls need to fuel their ambition, to succeed in life. We offer research-based programs that empower girls



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Girls Inc. of Winter Haven supporters pack the Poolside Room for the She Knows Where She's Going Luncheon held Thursday at the Chain of Lakes Complex in Winter Haven.

to reach their full potential."

City Commission Nat Birdsong opened the luncheon with an invocation, and the Girls Inc. Smart Team performed a choreographed cheer that explained the "Girls' Bill of Rights." The Proud Stepping Sisters of Girls Inc. also performed for the audience, emphasizing the Girls Inc. commit-

ment to "Strong, Smart and Bold" young women and girls.

This year's honorees were Suzie Moraco, winner of the Girls Inc. George Jenkins Award; Ilah Frazier, winner of the Virginia Snively Award; Joy Barranco, winner of the Ralph and Alice Thompson Award; and Lori Waters, winner of the Julie Pope

Award.

Moraco is a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney. She serves on the board of directors for the Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce and the Community Foundation of Greater Winter Haven. She also serves as board president of the Humane Society of Polk County and is a member of the Advisory Council for Our Children's Rehab and the Kiwanis Club of Winter Haven.

"I am honored and humbled to be in the company of the outstanding women who have received this award in the past," Moraco said. She encouraged the young women of Girls Inc. to get an education, follow their dreams and be true to themselves. Moraco praised the work of Girls Inc.: "What they're doing is obviously working."

She credits her parents and her husband, Sal Moraco, as her biggest influences, and she urged audience members to follow her example of public service.

"I'm extremely proud of her," said Sal Moraco. "She's totally dedicated to whatever cause she gets involved with."

Ilah Frazier, honored with the

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