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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Joe Kilsheimer  
Joe Kilsheimer Consulting Inc.  
407.880.2512 (w)  
407.719.6686 (c)  
[joe@jkconsultinginc.com](mailto:joe@jkconsultinginc.com)

## **Virginia Goren receives Florida Achievement award from Florida Commission on the Status of Women**

**ORLANDO, FL – (October 1, 2010)** – The City of Life Foundation is pleased to announce that board chair Virginia Goren has received a Florida Achievement Award from the Florida Commission on the Status of Women at the Commission's September 25 quarterly meeting in Tampa. The award recognizes Goren for a long record of community service in Central Florida that dates back to the 1970s.

Goren co-founded the City of Life Foundation in 2002 with a small group of child activists in Orlando who sought to improve outcomes for children in foster care, especially those making the transition to adulthood. Since then, propelled by Goren's energy and vision, the organization has worked to "foster independence" among former foster youth by giving them tools, opportunity and a chance to succeed.

Among the City of Life's initiatives led by Goren:

- **Job fairs** for foster youth in their late teens to acquaint them with employment opportunities in Central Florida
- **Education fairs** for foster youth that allowed young people to meet with representatives of local colleges and technical schools.
- Employer pools that created **job opportunities** for former foster youth. Among the companies and organizations that Goren has worked with to offer jobs to former foster youth are: Orlando Utilities Commission, the Orlando Magic, Westgate Resorts, Starwood Hotels and the Central Florida Manufacturers Association.
- Funding for an **environmental scan** that laid the ground work for **measuring outcomes** of efforts to assist foster youth. This ground-breaking study, conducted in 2009 by University of Central Florida researchers, provided measurable results that have been translated into actions that have helped increase the effectiveness of metro Orlando's foster care system.
- **The Regis Little task force.** This group in 2010 by Family Services of Metro Orlando and Florida DCF to look into the circumstances surrounding the early death of a special needs ex-foster child. The results have been widely

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publicized and supported in the child welfare community. The task force's recommendations are the basis of a new statewide initiative to help provide services on a continuing basis to foster youth with special needs.

Goren has a long track record of community service in Orlando. Among her many accomplishments:

- While serving with the Women's Resource Center in Orlando, Goren helped lead the creation of a women's rape crisis center in the late 1980s.
- While serving on the board of the Second Chance Foundation in Orlando, Goren helped disadvantaged women and single mothers obtain scholarships to pursue higher education.
- She helped secure funding in the 1980s for the 4-Cs program in Orlando to provide child care for single, working women.
- She served on the "Dave's House" program committee at Lakeside Behavioral Healthcare, working to provide special needs people a healthy housing option.
- As regional chair of the Florida Committee on the Status of Women, Goren worked with the Seminole County branch to develop a Seminole County Women's Rights Handbook, provided to women affected by domestic violence.

In addition to her work with the City of Life Foundation, Virginia has served in leadership roles for many other diverse groups. Among them:

- Florida Commission on the Status of Women: Orange County Chair and Regional Chair
- Lakeside Behavioral Healthcare Foundation, Founding Board of Directors and Board Chair
- Founding board member of Princeton Hospital Foundation
- AML/Brookwood Community Hospital/Princeton Hospital, Board of Directors and Board Chair
- Orlando Science Center, Board of Directors
- International Association of Business Communicators/Central Florida, Founding Board Member
- Florida Public Relations Association, VP Orlando Area Chapter
- Newman House, Catholic Campus Ministry Board of Directors
- Florida Executive Women, Founding Board member
- PESO Board of Directors
- Italian Cultural Society, Founding member and Board Chair
- Women's Educational Consortium
- Orange County Human Relations Advisory and Hearing Board Member
- Morning Star Guild, Past President and 30-year member
- Women's Resource Center Board of Directors

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- Town & Gown Council, University of Central Florida; Past President
- Central Florida Veterans Inc., Board of Directors

### **About the City of Life Foundation**

The City of Life Foundation was founded in 2004 to provide foster youth with tools, opportunity and a chance. The City of Life is a 501(c)3 corporation made up of a volunteer board and one full-time employee interested in making a positive difference in the lives of young people, especially foster youth, age 16 and older as they make transition to adulthood. The Foundation works with existing community resources to build a self-sustaining program that provides jobs and structure for at-risk youth with a particular focus on foster care youth that "age out" of the system. For more information, please visit our website at [www.cityoflifeorlando.org](http://www.cityoflifeorlando.org).

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