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COMMUNITY BUILDING LUNCHEON A SUCCESS

Tampa – Community Tampa Bay, formerly known as NCCJ, held its first Community Building Luncheon on May 4th, 2006. Some 300 guests attended the Luncheon in honor of all Silver Medallion Humanitarian Award recipients.

After a powerful invocation by Rabbi Luski, Executive Director, Birgit Van Hout, officially launched the new name and website of the organization, while underlining that its mission to promote intercultural dialogue remained the same: *“Just think about the recent, racially inspired acts of vandalism, the high index of hate crimes, the overt hostility against gays and lesbians. As long as there is intolerance in our community, we have work to do.”*

Two testimonial speakers shared how Community Tampa Bay continued to impact their lives. Kanika Tomalin, Director of Corporate Communication at Bayfront Medical Center, talking about the organization’s youth leadership and diversity awareness program, “Anytown”, professed that *“It gave me the strength and courage to advocate day after day for the less privileged in our community, in particular our indigent patients.”*

Danya Shakfeh, a USF College Student, remembered how, as an American Muslim, she was treated differently and offended by her peers after 9/11, to the point of losing all self-confidence: *“Beyond helping me as an individual, this organization empowered me to organize dialogues among students in my school. Now, I want to go to Law School, to speak for those who do not have a voice.”*

The Luncheon raised over \$100,000 and was sponsored by Kane’s Furniture, Bonefish Grill, JPMorgan Chase, Ferman Motor Car Company, Foley & Lardner, LLP, St. Petersburg Times, The Sembler Company, TECO Energy, and Albright & Associates, LLC.