



**MEDIA ALERT: LEADERSHIP GROWS AT STAR CHILDREN'S CHARITY**  
*Eight new board members join the efforts to be a leading voice of philanthropy in Collin County*

**(Plano, TX) May 4, 2009** – In times where fundraising is challenging, a leading philanthropy in Collin County is focused on leadership and growth to secure funds to support the agencies committed to the children of Collin County. Star Children's Charity was recently gifted eight new members to their Board of Directors to serve a two-year term during their April meeting. The new leaders include Bryan Alexander, Barry and Debra Benton, Nora Cuellar Carter, Greg Fuller, Mary Ellen George, Justine Sweeney, Beth Weingarden and Philip M. Wentworth. Members of the Star Children's Charity Board of Directors are responsible for guiding the organization, provide leadership and experience, play a hands-on role in fundraising to meet the financial needs of the beneficiary agencies. Since its inception in 2007, Star Children's Charity has committed to being a leading voice of philanthropy in Collin County, dedicated to financially supporting non-profit organizations that benefit the well being of children and their families. The new members were welcomed in a reception along with the newly appointed Executive Director, Brenda Ewing Snitzer at Gleneagles Country Club. Sustaining board members include Jim Boswell, Keith Braley, Sandy and Dave Brennan, Michelle Brennan Hall, Ronelle Ianace, Deb McGinnis, Sue and Jim Minyard, Dr. Betty Muns, Linda S. Paulk, Bill Shaddock and Michael Urtso. Bios of the new board members are included below.

**Bryan Alexander – President of Collin Bank, Frisco**

Bryan Alexander began his banking career more than a decade ago with Bank of America's Private Bank after graduating from Dallas Baptist University with a Bachelor of Business Studies degree. His focus shifted to community banking and has worked at community banks primarily as a real estate banker in Terrell, Garland, Plano and most recently at Town North Bank in Farmers Branch and has received numerous awards from each institution. Currently, Alexander is completing graduate work at the Southwest Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University where he serves as First Vice President of his class. Alexander is also an active member of Habitat for Humanity and the Frisco Chamber of Commerce.

**Barry Benton – CEO of Gittings, Dallas**

Barry Benton is the CEO of Gittings, a family and executive portrait studio in Dallas, TX. Gittings has served the Dallas and Collin County areas since the 1920's. Barry is married to Debra Benton and they have two children, Andrew and Jason. He is a member of the Plano Rotary club, Plano Chamber, North Dallas Chamber, Greater Dallas Regional Chamber and Luxury Marketing Council. Barry has served on The 500, Inc. board of directors and, along with his wife, directed ARTFEST, one of the largest juried arts festivals in the southwest. Prior to Gittings, Barry owned a family portrait studio in Plano.

**Debra Benton - Director of Community Relations/Charitable Giving, Southwest Airlines, Dallas**

Debra Benton oversees the Share the Spirit program, Southwest's internal umbrella for all of its corporate cash and in-kind donations as well as volunteerism programs including the award-winning Adopt A Pilot program. As part of the famous Southwest Culture, Benton is a proud Alumnus of the Culture Committee. In her 11 year career with Southwest Airlines, she worked as the Director of Loyalty Marketing which included the award-winning frequent flyer program, Rapid Rewards, and the Partner relationships affiliated with the program. Currently, Benton is on the library board for the City of Plano, board member of the Leadership Texas Alumni Association. She is a member of the 2006 class of Leadership Texas, a program of the Foundation for Women's Resources, a board member of The 500, Inc., chairperson of ARTFEST, an outdoor arts festival that raises money for arts of Dallas.

**Nora Cueller Carter – President of Direct Selling Partners, Plano**

Nora Cueller Carter is the President of Direct Selling Partners, a sales and marketing consulting firm specializing in the direct selling industry. She is also an officer of Direct Selling Capital, which makes investments in a variety of enterprises including real estate and direct selling companies. Prior to starting Direct Selling Partners, Carter spent more than 18 years in strategic development and sales and marketing roles where she set records at every organization she worked. Passionate about making a difference in the lives of others, especially with endeavors that help to empower women and support children, Carter is actively involved in several organizations.

**Greg Fuller – Chief Operating Officer of Granite Properties, Plano**

Greg Fuller is currently the Chief Operating Officer for Granite Properties where he oversees operations, development, human resources and corporate administration companywide while also focusing on development, leasing and growth for the Dallas office. Prior to joining Granite Properties, Fuller worked as a Senior Associate with CB Richard Ellis and as a National Sales Representative for IBM Corporation before spending seven years with Paric Corporation as Vice President of Business Development and Corporate Marketing. Currently, Fuller serves as a board member of NAIOP, the Plano Economic Development Board and The Plano Developers Council, is a member of The Real Estate Council and is a general associate of SIOR and CCIM.

**Mary Ellen George – General Manager of Advito, Dallas**

Mary Ellen George has been a member of the BCD Travel family since 1993, the world's third largest travel management company. In her 16 years with the US division, she served as the executive vice president of sales and marketing in the Americas, served as the president of the BCD Travel's West Division and launched and served as the president of BCD Travel's online fulfillment services operation in the United States. Currently George serves as the executive sponsor for BCD Travel's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and is the General Manager of Advito. Her responsibilities include oversight of BCD Travel's global consulting practice that is focused on travel advisories and management services. She also leads the Intelligence and Innovation and Business Solutions Team that supports BCD Travel's commercial initiatives.

**Justine Sweeney – President of Sweeney Media Group, Frisco**

Justine Sweeney is founder and president of Sweeney Media Group, a boutique marketing and public relations firm combining the best talent, practices and passion to build brands and grow clients' business throughout North Texas. As a Collin County resident, business owner and volunteer, Sweeney and her team generously supports several non-profits in the area including Arts of Collin County, Sci-Tech Discovery Center, NTBCA, Frisco Arts, Boys & Girls Club of Collin County, Frisco Family Services Center,

Pfamily Arts and others. Sweeney has received several community leadership awards including being named a 2009 Finalist Comerica Collin 60, 2008 Frisco “Best of Business” Community Partner of Year by the Frisco Chamber of Commerce, awarded “Best of Business Frisco” by Frisco STYLE Magazine in 2007 and named 21 Leaders for the 21st Century by the Collin County Business Press in 2006.

**Beth Weingarden – Owner of Commercial Real Estate Consulting, Plano**

Beth Weingarden is the owner of Commercial Real Estate Consulting and has more than 20 years experience in commercial real estate, consulting, investment evaluations, financial analysis and modeling, acquisitions due diligence, investment sales and commercial property leasing. Weindgarden is active among the real estate industry with several organizations including The Real Estate Council, Commercial Real Estate Women and the Plano Developer’s Council. In addition to her professional engagements, Weindgarden is also active within the Collin County community and serves on several city and nonprofit boards including the Plano Chamber of Commerce, Junior League of Plano, Collin County Children’s Advocacy Center and the Plano Symphony Orchestra. Most recently she was named one of 21 Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by the Collin County Business Press.

**Philip M. Wentworth – Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Plano**

Phil Wentworth is a legendary leader in the North Texas area. He served as the President of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital of Plano and was a member of the Presbyterian Healthcare System for 30 years before retiring in February 2009. Wentworth is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and in October 2006, he received the American College of Healthcare Executives Senior-Level healthcare Executive Regent’s Award, which is given annually to recognize experiences and generous ACHE affiliates. His leadership on several local and state medical boards helped Presbyterian Hospital of Plano achieve Magnet status in 2007 and the Texas Award of Performance Excellence in 2008. In addition to his work, Wentworth was involved with several non-profit organizations and is a past-chairman of the Board of Directors of the Plano Chamber of Commerce where he received the 2002 Citizen of the Year award.

**ABOUT STAR CHILDREN’S CHARITY:** Star Children’s Charity is a leading voice of philanthropy in Collin County, dedicated to financially supporting non-profit organizations that benefit the well being of children. Founded by Michelle Brennan Hall and Linda Paulk in 2007, Star Children’s Charity consists of 100 accomplished and philanthropic families who produce sought-after fundraising events throughout the year including Star “Dust” Designer One Day Boutique, Star Clay Shoot, the Starbright Golf Tournament, Cooking with Legends and the Star Winter Ball to help raise over \$1,400,0000 annually. Star Children’s Charity members are passionate about changing the lives of Collin County’s children by supporting efforts to improve services for medical, education, enrichment and safety. Star encourages the community to learn more about Star Children’s Charity and join their efforts by visiting [www.starchildrens.com](http://www.starchildrens.com) or contacting Marlene Kamholz at (972) 943-3344 or [marlene@starchildrens.com](mailto:marlene@starchildrens.com)

###