

# Community Newspapers

APRIL 3 - 16, 2012

## Lighthouse Dog Walk heightens awareness for service animals

**BY CAMERON EHREN SISSER**

More than 150 walkers with their guide dogs, service animals and regular pet companions pledged support for the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired to raise awareness for the amazing work service animals provide to those who are in need.

The Miami Lighthouse conducted its fifth annual Walk, Waggle and Stroll Dog Walk at the Shops at Midtown Miami on Sunday, Mar. 25. This year's event was hosted by Honorary 'Dog' nitary Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman with WPLG Channel 10's Sasha Andrade as emcee.

"In addition to raising much-needed funds for our programs at Miami Lighthouse, which provide rehabilitation and vocational training to thousands of people every year, our fifth annual Walk, Waggle and Stroll Dog Walk raised a great deal of awareness for the presence of service animals in our community," said Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia A. Jacko, who is blind and uses a dog guide named Kieran.

Special recognition was given to Commissioner Heyman and Carol Russo who conceived the idea for the dog walk five years ago.

Contest prizes for "cutest," "look-alike," and "most talented dog," were judged by Miami-Dade County Public Defender Carlos Martinez, Miami Lighthouse Board of Directors chair Michael Silva, board director Lou Nostro and Dog Walk co-creator Russo. Also in attendance was Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez.

Music and sound engineering was provided by instructors in the Miami Lighthouse Better Chance Music Production Program.

The Miami Lighthouse Dog Walk was sponsored by The Shops at Midtown Miami, Brickell Motors, Met Life, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, Gray Robinson, Banfield Pet Hospital, Frances T. King Insurance Agency, Milton and Patricia Wallace, Rugsies Carpet & Drapery Cleaning, BizSolutions, Britto, WPLG Local 10, Susan Conroy Design, Absolute Graphics, Brooklyn Bagels, Fuze and Miami Global Colombian Lions Club.



*Pictured with members of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Urban Search and Rescue Team are (starting third from left) Miami-Dade County Public Defender Carlos Martinez, County Commissioner Sally Heyman, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Miami Lighthouse for the Blind president and CEO Virginia Jacko.*