

Proclamation



Bob Buckhorn, Mayor

WHEREAS, all children deserve strong families with mothers and fathers who are there to protect and love them, and the mission of the **Children's Board Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay** (Heart Gallery) is to raise awareness of Tampa's waiting foster children, engage the community in their welfare and secure permanent, loving adoptive families, which enriches the lives of the children and the adoptive families, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, celebrating its *Tenth Anniversary*, the Heart Gallery is a photographic touring exhibit with more than 100 Hillsborough County teens and children featured, and it was created to find forever families for children in foster care, highlighting higher-risk children who may have difficulty finding permanent homes due to factors such as race, age, large sibling groups, and those with special needs; and

WHEREAS, donating their time and talent, professional photographers capture each child's character and personality in these fine art portraits, and biographical profiles are included in the touring exhibit that travels throughout the community and featured in an interactive website; and

WHEREAS, the Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay's **Be Mine 2015 Gala** on February 12, 2015 at the Palma Ceia County Club in Tampa, Florida features the theme "*There's No Place Like Home*" and it celebrates all of the great accomplishments of the past decade, and what can be accomplished in the future that will be life-changing for children and families in our community; and

WHEREAS, **The Honorable Judge Katherine Essrig**, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, will receive the prestigious Heart Gallery's *Lifetime Achievement Award* during the Be Mine 2015 Gala in recognition of her dedication, positive impact and advocacy for children and families, for her tireless efforts in and out of her courtroom in the Juvenile Dependency Division on behalf of them, for leadership in creating specialty divisions to address particular needs including a Specialized Adoptions Division, and for her work locally and statewide with child welfare organizations; and

WHEREAS, with citizens of Tampa like Judge Essrig, and organizations such as the Children's Board Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay, many children have been fortunate in realizing the finalization of an adoption, and are secure in the love of families they can now call their own.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Buckhorn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim Thursday, February 12, 2015 as

"CHILDREN'S BOARD HEART GALLERY OF TAMPA BAY DAY"

in the City of Tampa, Florida, and urge all citizens to join in congratulating and thanking The Honorable Judge Katherine Essrig and the Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay for their dedication and commitment in finding caring families and individuals who have made a difference in a child's life through adoption.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 12th day of February, 2015.



Bob Buckhorn

Mayor