Southern Wine & Spirits contributes $30 million to Step Up For Students Scholarship Program

Step Up For Students is a nonprofit organization that administers the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and provides scholarships to lower-income Florida students.

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Step Up For Students announced today that Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. (Southern), the nation’s leading wine and spirits distributor, has committed $30 million to the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program for the 2014-15 school year. Southern’s commitment is the largest single contribution to date in the nonprofit organization’s 12-year history, and will fund more than 5,500 scholarships.

Step Up For Students administers the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships to qualified low-income families throughout Florida. Scholarships are funded by corporations that receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for their contributions. The program will allow recipients to choose between a scholarship to help with private school tuition and fees, or a transportation scholarship to attend an out-of-district public school.

“At Southern, we know the importance of a quality education,” said Southern President and Chief Executive Officer, Wayne E. Chaplin. “This program is truly changing lives, and we take great pride in making a positive impact on so many Florida families.”

This marks the fifth year Southern has contributed to Step Up For Students, bringing the company’s total to an astounding $90 million.

“Southern Wine & Spirits has given significantly to Florida students, and it’s very exciting to think about the magnitude of their contribution and the opportunities these children will now have as a result.” said Doug Tuthill, President of Step Up For Students. “We are grateful for our partnership with Southern and for all they’re doing to promote our mission of providing quality educational options to those in need.”

During the 2014-15 school year, Step Up For Students expects to serve approximately 68,000 students throughout Florida, with more than 5,500 who will directly benefit from Southern’s contributions. In Miami-Dade County last school year there were more than 300 participating schools and approximately 16,000 benefiting students.

Tuthill added, “This is shaping up to be the program’s most successful fundraising year ever. Step Up For Students is close to hitting its statutory fundraising cap, with nearly 85 percent of the program’s $357 million cap already reserved by Florida’s business community. Any qualifying company wishing to make or augment their redirection should do so quickly.”

About Step Up For Students Step Up For Students is a nonprofit organization responsible for administering the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. The scholarship program is available to students who qualify for free- or reduced-price
lunch and students who are in foster care or who are homeless. It provides tuition assistance to the private school of their parents’ choice or transportation help to an out-of-district public school. Scholarships are funded by corporations that receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for their contributions.

Step Up For Students also helps administer state-funded personal learning scholarship accounts (PLSA) for Florida students with special needs. With the PLSA’s, recipients may use the funds for a variety of services including private tutoring, occupational therapy, instructional materials and other services.

For further information, visit www.StepUpForStudents.org.

About Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc.

Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. is the nation’s largest wine and spirits distributor and broker with operations in 35 markets. The multi-state distributor currently operates in: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Kentucky, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming. Southern also holds operating licenses and permits in Nebraska and Texas. On a national basis, Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. employs more than 14,000 team members. Southern urges all retail customers and adult consumers to market, sell, serve and enjoy its products responsibly. For more information about Southern and its responsible consumption program, see: http://www.southernwine.com.