

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**DATE:** October 8, 2010

**CONTACT:** Martha Mannarino (407) 852-3352, [mmannarino@ucpcf.org](mailto:mmannarino@ucpcf.org)  
or Ryan Dumas (407) 852-3305, [rdumas@ucpcf.org](mailto:rdumas@ucpcf.org)

**UCP CEO ILENE WILKINS NAMED  
“CENTRAL FLORIDA WOMAN OF THE YEAR”**

**Orlando, Fla. (October 8, 2010)** - UCP of Central Florida is pleased to announce that the Women’s Executive Council of Orlando has named President/Chief Executive Officer Ilene Wilkins as “Central Florida Woman of the Year.”

The award will be presented to Wilkins on October 13, 2010, at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Women’s Achievement Awards, held at the Citrus Club (255 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The prestigious designation is awarded annually to a local woman who has exhibited special accomplishments and outstanding qualities; civic affiliations and associations; and education and expertise. According to the Women’s Executive Council, the goal of the annual Women’s Achievement Awards is to recognize women who work tirelessly behind the scenes, contributing unselfishly to the vitality and richness of Central Florida.

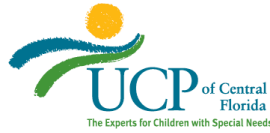
Ten categories of deserving women will be recognized at this year’s ceremony, including “Woman of the Year” as well as various scholarships awards to outstanding students.

Wilkins legacy with UCP of Central Florida began fifteen years ago when she joined UCP in 1995 as center director. At that time, the organization had one preschool location with only 50 children, 25 team members and a \$500,000 budget.

In 2002, Wilkins was promoted to President/CEO. Under her eight-year leadership, UCP has grown to become the fifth largest non-profit in the region, serving 2,400 children annually in six locations with 300 team members and a \$13 million budget.

Her accomplishments have been plentiful, but in 2009, Wilkins saw one of her most significant achievements come to life—the opening of a state-of-the-art, 35,000-square-foot, inclusive campus that allowed for a 200 percent increase in the number of classrooms available to special needs children in the community.

Under her direction through these past eight years, UCP has met or exceeded accountability targets, including graduating over 60 percent of children into a typical/mainstream setting. The agency has been recognized both locally and nationally, through grant awards, for outstanding quality and innovation in its



education and clinical programs. Perhaps most importantly, the parents of the special children touched by Wilkins' leadership continue to entrust the care of their most precious loved ones to a team of individuals committed to being the experts for children with special needs in Central Florida.

.....

**About Ilene Wilkins:** Wilkins is a member of the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management Advisory Board and the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative Doctoral Cohort at the University of Central Florida. She also serves on the boards for both the Professional Council of UCPA and the Orange County Early Learning Coalition. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and math from New York University; a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University; and an Ed.D. in education leadership from the University of Central Florida.

**About UCP of Central Florida:** Founded in 1955, UCP of Central Florida provides support, education and therapy services for children with and without special needs ages infant to 21. Services are offered at six locations throughout Central Florida: downtown Orlando, East Orlando near UCF, Kissimmee, Lake Mary, Pine Hills and Winter Garden. Visit [www.ucpcf.org](http://www.ucpcf.org) <<http://www.ucpcf.org/>> for more information.

###