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Governor Crist Names Lizette Valarino of Orlando as Point of Light for Hispanic Heritage Month

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today recognized Lizette Valarino of Orlando as this week's Point of Light in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month.

"Lizette's ongoing commitment to helping her neighbors is a testament to her giving and humble nature," said Governor Crist. "She is a true leader and advocate for Orlando's Hispanic community."

In 2000, Valarino founded the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund of Metro Orlando, a non-profit organization that awards scholarships to outstanding Hispanic students in Central Florida. To date, the fund has awarded over \$319,000 to help 115 exceptional students attend colleges and universities. She also serves as secretary to the Board of the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund of Greater Orlando. She is a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando and coordinator of Amigos del Orlando Ballet.

Over the past 20 years, Valarino has been a dedicated public servant and volunteer in central Florida, focused on bringing attention to Hispanic issues. She currently serves as a special assistant to Orange County Mayor Richard T. Crotty. While serving under former Mayor Mel Martinez, she formed the Hispanic Heritage Celebration Committee of Orange County, an organization of Hispanic county employees who join together to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

AAA Auto Club South is the supporting sponsor of the Governor's Points of Light Award. This program recognizes Florida residents who demonstrate exemplary service to the community. Award recipients are announced weekly. A panel of judges comprised of leaders in the areas of volunteerism and service evaluate all nominations and make recommendations to the Governor. The Volunteer Florida Foundation manages the program. For more information, or to submit a nomination, go to www.VolunteerFloridaFoundation.org.

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