

# The Education Fund's Ocean Bank Center Receives 2009 NOVO Award From Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

MIAMI, April 2 -- The Education Fund's Ocean Bank Center for Education Materials has received the 2009 NOVO Award from the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, which honors excellence in non-profit business innovation.

The Education Fund works side-by-side with the private sector to direct resources where they are needed most in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The Education Fund fulfills its mission by designing and implementing initiatives to improve schools and bring excellence to public education. In two decades they have raised \$35.5 million to increase academic achievement in Miami-Dade schools.

The Education Fund's President Linda Lecht and Ocean Bank COO Terry Curry accepted the award from Chamber Chairman Carlos Guzman at the Chamber's monthly Board of Trustees meeting.

Ocean Bank Center's primary objective is to meet the intense demand for educational tools, supplies and resources that create the supportive environment students need to learn.

Since 1993, The Ocean Bank Center has donated \$5.6 million worth of supplies to 14,500 teachers, reaching more than 500,000 students. The center is housed in a centrally located, 11,000-square-foot warehouse where teachers "shop for free" for classroom materials donated by more than 650 area businesses.

While resources are made available to the entire district's 22,000 teachers in nearly 400 public schools, its inventory of classroom supplies is especially critical to teachers in low-income neighborhoods, where students sometimes don't even have pencils or paper. Items available at the warehouse range from the traditional staples of pencils, crayons, paper and rulers to more diverse items including fabric and Styrofoam.



The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce 2009 NOVO Award to The Ocean Bank Center for Educational Materials is accepted by Linda Lecht, President, The Education Fund (second from right) and Terry Curry, Ocean Bank COO (far right).

Before the Ocean Bank Center, there was no mechanism in place for businesses to donate to schools. Now, with one call, a company can ensure that its goods are efficiently and effectively distributed. In fact, the center was the first facility in Florida established specifically to distribute supplies to public schools. Its success as a reuse/recycle center serves as a model for similar programs across the country.

The Center spawned another first-of-its-kind program upon receipt of 100 used computers. Through FamilyTech, the Ocean Bank Center solicits and refurbishes computers for impoverished families. More than 10,000 needy families have received computers, along with training for both the students and parents.

Information about The Education Fund is available online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).