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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Miles for Makayla brought together hundreds to celebrate the life of Makayla Sitton**

JUPITER, FL - Hundreds of runners hit the streets on Saturday, November 17 to honor a very special child and raise funds to enhance the lives of local children. Despite rain in the early morning hours, "Miles for Makayla 5K Run/Walk" raised over \$15,000 and nearly 800 people turned out to support the cause including nearly 90 volunteers. Funds from the event will go to the Makayla Joy Sitton Foundation and will support scholarships in Makayla's name at local schools in the areas of dance, music, and singing... all things that Makayla loved and enjoyed.

"We were thrilled with the number of participants that came out to support the event and travelled from all over to be here to honor Makayla. We had 12 teams this year and the largest team was from the US Marshalls that drove all the way from Miami to be a part of this day," said Charlene Maville, 2012 Miles for Makayla 5k Run/Walk Co-Race Director.

The second annual run/walk and family event was presented by Waste Pro and supported by more than 50 sponsors. The event featured a 5K race through the beautiful community of Abacoa; Makayla's Mile, a family friendly walk; and free races for kids ages 7 and under. The day also included a "Diaper Dash" where the smallest participants could dash, scoot or crawl their way to the finish line. Parents and on lookers surrounded the kids cheering them on as they crossed the finish line.

The event also featured special appearances from the scholarship recipient groups: Florida Classical Ballet Theatre, Jupiter Academy of Music, and the Young Singers of the Palm Beaches. Scholarship recipients from the Jupiter Academy of Music took to the stage for a musical performance; Florida Classical Ballet Theatre dancers graced the stage in beautiful pink flowing tutus and handed out award medals; Soloists from the Young Singers of the Palm Beaches sang the national anthem to kick off the awards ceremony along with an emotional rendition of "The Climb" to close things out. As an extra special touch, musicians lined the course and performed as runners and walkers went by.

Makayla's memory and spirit was everywhere during the event and especially present in a special wooden handmade game called "Makayla's Thanksgiving Toss" that was created by her father, Jim Sitton. It was inspired by a game that Makayla played on her last Thanksgiving and on the back of the game there was a copy of the last picture taken of Makayla on that day and a story of how she loved to play it. The games were sold to 4 families to raise funds for the foundation.

"This was a game she loved to play and it is meant to draw families together and encourage them to focus on the loved ones they are thankful for in their lives," said Muriel Sitton, Makayla's Mom.

The uplifting day was made even more special by the free family entertainment which included Bush Wildlife's animal show, All Star Entertainment's juggling, magical acts, and clowns, Face Art by Daisy, Miniature Dream Parties' pony "unicorn", Space Walk Bounce House, Keep Flippin Gymnastics and Kona Ice.

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Each runner received a custom finished medal, with the fastest time of 16:55 going to veteran runner, John Reback. Nearly 100 award medals were given out.

"The event was a tremendous success in bringing together the community again to celebrate the life and joy of Makayla. I look forward to watching this event grow and grow each year," said Maville.

Makayla Joy Sitton's life was taken in a deadly massacre nearly three years ago on Thanksgiving night in her family's Jupiter home. The grief over the loss of their 6 year old daughter is still profound for the Sittons. But they find comfort in knowing Makayla's light shines on with this family-fun event. This year's event was extra special for the Sittons as they were able to share it with Makayla's new little baby sister, Natalia Grace Sitton, now 9 months old.

Muriel and Jim Sitton added, "It is humbling to see the community come out year after year and remember our little girl. This race event means a lot to us because it brings together families for a great cause, honors our little girl, and will bring some good out of a horrible tragedy. The outpouring of support from volunteers and businesses in our community has touched us deeply. "

For more information about this year's event visit [www.milesformakayla.com](http://www.milesformakayla.com). To give to the Makayla Joy Sitton Foundation visit [www.makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org](http://www.makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org).

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**Makayla Joy Sitton Foundation** is committed to honoring the life and light of Makayla Joy Sitton; our Foundation's mission is to inspire families through the arts and education, giving children in need the chance to enjoy the same creative pursuits that Makayla so lovingly embraced. We achieve this by funding scholarships and other programs in our community dedicated to enriching the minds and spirits of our children, and equipping families for a strong tomorrow.  
[www.makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org](http://www.makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org)

Event Photos are available by contacting [info@makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org](mailto:info@makaylajoyssittonfoundation.org)