



Skills For Living, Inc.

7660 Woodway, Suite 200

Houston, TX 77063

713-782-9974

www.Skills4Living.org

Press Release

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Contact – Cate Rugano 713-782-9974

Decker receives FDIC Chairman Award for Innovation in Financial Education

December 3, 2009 - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and Skills For Living, Inc. (S4L) announce Lorraine Decker, CLU, ChFC, MSFS, President and Founder of S4L has received the FDIC Chairman's Award for Innovation in Financial Education at the National Press Club, Washington, DC.

This award is the final component of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's 75th Anniversary observance and is meant to recognize excellence and innovation in financial education. This is the highest award given by the FDIC to non-employees for contributions to personal finance education.

FDIC Chairman Sheila Bair presented the Chairman's Award to Decker, representing the Dallas FDIC Region, and to recipients from the 5 other FDIC Regions.

Decker was asked about the challenges facing financial education. Decker stated,

"Marketing financial education is a challenge. When individuals are working 50 or more hours a week, earning less than \$20,000 a year, have children to raise and still can't pay their bills, rarely do they turn to financial education for help.

For education to be valued, it must be relevant. Adults and teens in S4L programs are shown how to use financial knowledge to achieve goals, increase earned income, obtain a college education, find a better job and build wealth.

Students of all ages learn how to complete tax returns, financial statements, buy homes, insurance and cars. They also learn how to reduce debt, restructure loans, open and manage bank accounts, IRAs, and find jobs with benefits. With financial education they learn how to become financially secure with a plan for becoming financially independent.

But even with our demonstrated successes, scheduling and funding financial education workshops is difficult. Adults want to attend but lack reliable and affordable after-hour and weekend child care, and have inadequate public transportation. For our high school financial education program, the Game of Real Life, students have rated it excellent with 99% stating they would recommend it to their friends. Yet high schools, with high dropout rates, lack the funds to make our programs available.

Instead of investing small amounts today in innovative and effective financial education programs, designed to help at-risk high school students make solid decisions for their future, our society defers the investment and spends hundreds times more in welfare benefits, finding unrewarding work for unemployed, unskilled young adults and paying for prisons.

Many of our nation's working-poor and teens have given up hope of ever attaining the American Dream. But we know it is attainable, and that is why Skills For Living continues to offer the comprehensive financial education skills necessary to achieve success in life"

Under Decker's leadership, Skills For Living, Inc., a Houston based non-profit organization, offers two comprehensive, integrated financial, career, life skills and college planning programs to achieve personal improvement through empowerment and knowledge.

20-20 Power Workshops is an 80-hour engaging workshop with financial coaching for low and moderate income families, designed to increase income and savings. The workshops are led by volunteer financial professionals with the average graduate increasing his/her income by 38% or \$6,307/year and increasing net worth by 37% or \$5.795 in one year. Since inception, this program has contributed more than \$1,895,000 to the Houston economy.

Game of Real Life is the first comprehensive financial, career and college planning course approved by the TEA for high school credit. It engages teens in a competitive reality simulation experiential game where they must interview, train and work with Houston employers while paying bills, filing tax returns, preparing financial statements, renting dorm rooms and apartments, paying tuition, and purchasing homes, cars and insurance. Teens experience the importance of making the right decisions today to have a successful future. The course is offered in the summer with special extra events in the fall and spring. The program is held in collaboration with the University of Houston and offered in Aldine ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Houston ISD, Kipp, Spring Branch ISD, Stafford MSD and Yes Prep high schools.

Skills For Living receives funding from United Way Thrive where Skills For Living works with many of Houston's largest non-profits (Neighborhood Centers Inc, Workfaith Connections, Family Services, Covenant Community Capital, and LISC) to build financially stable Houston families and sustainable communities.

S4L is also funded by Annunziato Foundation, Rockwell Fund, the Robertson-Finley Foundation, the Mandy Kao Foundation, the Fred and Mabel Parks Foundation, Xerox Foundation, University of Houston, Houston Financial Planning Association, Hewlett-Packard, ExxonMobil, Capital One Bank, Houston Construction Software Solutions, Halliburton, Schlumberger and donations of money and time from hundreds of talented professionals.

Lorraine Decker credits her financial education knowledge from the work she did as President of Decker & Associates, where she and her husband, co-founder of Skills For Living, Ken Decker, CPA-PFS, CFP provided employer-sponsored financial planning workshops through many of Houston's major employers.