



Koinonia Foundation Tennessee

Programs For Life Long Learning and Enrichment For Individuals with Multiple Disabilities

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2016

Koinonia Foundation Contact: Ruth Patrick, Executive Director, 865-888-7365, rpatrick@kftn.org

Camp Koinonia Contact: Dr. Angela Wozencroft, Assoc. Professor & Camp Koinonia Program Director, 865-974-1289, awozenc1@utk.edu

TOTS Contact: Kristyn Royster, 2016 Executive Committee Member, 865-661-1567 or Beth Breeding, 540-290-3965, press@tasteofthesouth.org

Date: Friday, September 23rd, 2016

Time: 1pm with opening comments at 1:20pm

Place: University of Tennessee Visitor Center, 2712 Neyland Drive, Knoxville, TN 37996

What: Check to Koinonia Foundation Board Chair & Camp Program Director from Kristyn Royster, 2016 Taste of the South Executive Committee Member and 2012 University of Tennessee graduate;

Who: Hosted by Bill Williams, former co-anchor with WBIR 10 News, with speakers from the Koinonia Foundation, University of Tennessee and Camp Koinonia.

The Koinonia Foundation/Camp Koinonia Foundation is honored to receive its largest gift of financial support in the organizations 15-year history. A gift in the amount of \$187,208 will be presented to the Foundation at the press conference on Friday, September 23rd, 2016.

Koinonia Foundation Board Members, Camp Koinonia Director and program participants will be present for the check presentation. The contribution is from the Taste of the South (TOTS) Gala held this past spring in Washington D.C. Taste of the South (TOTS) was founded in 1982 in a dual desire to bring some “southern hospitality” to Washington, and establish a fundraiser for needy charities. Today, TOTS raises over half a million dollars each year for deserving charities in 13 southern states as well as the District of Columbia. The annual black-tie gala is attended by over 2,000 people and features a live band for a night of dancing and southern fare, libations, and specialty products donated from vendors and organizations across the south.

The Koinonia Foundation and its legacy camp program, Camp Koinonia was the featured charity for the 2016 gala. Camp K is a week-long, outdoor education program for 150 children, ages 7-21, who have multiple disabilities. Camp K’s primary focus is to provide an opportunity for children and young adults, some with severe disabilities, to attend an outdoor camp that they normally would not be able to. The camp was originally developed in 1977 at Virginia Tech and has now transitioned to The University of Tennessee (UT). The camp is staffed by over 200 UT students and is held towards the end of each spring semester. Camp activities include horseback riding, canoeing, ropes course, music and movement, camp fires, talent shows, and more. Camp K is one of several legacy programs offered in partnership with the Koinonia Foundation and The University of Tennessee, College of Health and Human Sciences and the Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies.

Joe Ortiz, Chairperson, Koinonia Foundation, issued the following statement: “In the Koinonia Foundation’s 15 years of the existence, this is the single largest and most significant gift we have received. These funds will

enable us to continue closing the annual funding gap for the University of Tennessee Camp Koinonia program for many years to come. We are now in a stronger position to continue with our board directed service expansion, developing much needed new programs for special needs adults.”

Dr. Angela Wozencroft, Assoc. Professor & Camp Koinonia Program Director, issued the following statement: “It is amazing graduates like Kristyn Royster who make Camp K so successful and we are so honored by her continued support of the program and advocacy with TOTS. This gift would not be possible without her initiative and thoughtfulness. For that we are truly grateful.”

Kristyn Royster, Assistant to the Chief of Staff at US Senate, 2016 Taste of the South Executive Committee Member, 2012 UT-Knoxville Graduate, issued the following statement: "Even though I was a journalism major at UT, Camp K welcomed me as a counselor with open arms. The class, campers and my fellow students taught me so much in just one semester. Once I moved to DC after graduation, I wanted to find a way to give back to a program that gave so much to me. As a member of the Taste of the South Charity Gala planning committee, I knew this would be a great platform to do just that. So I'm excited to be in my hometown, and back at my Alma Mater to present this donation to such a deserving charity, Camp K!!"

Brooke Shupe Appleton, 2016 Taste of the South Committee chairman, issued the following statement: “Since its inception, Taste of the South is proud to have donated over \$4 million to deserving southern charities. We are thrilled to add Camp K to that list this year! Camp K’s mission to provide a life changing experience and build lasting memories for youth with disabilities is a truly worthy cause. Our donation to Camp K, thanks to the generous support of our many sponsors, will go towards scholarships for campers, additional activities, and replacing outdated medical equipment. Thank you to everyone who has supported Taste of the South. We can’t wait to see Camp K put this donation into action!”

ABOUT:

The **Koinonia Foundation Tennessee and Camp Koinonia**, a Tennessee based charity founded in 2001, is a 501©3 nonprofit organization. The mission is to serve individuals with disabilities in multiple functional domains with unique, needs-based programs that enrich their lives and provide the opportunity to achieve life-long learning. In partnership with the University of Tennessee, the foundation has supported the operation of Camp Koinonia for the past 32 years. **Camp Koinonia** is an outdoor education/camp program for children ages 7-21 who have multiple disabilities. The program was developed in 1977 at Virginia Tech and is now part of a service-learning class at **The University of Tennessee** with the primary purpose of providing a meaningful, experiential learning opportunity for university students while involving children and young adults, some with severe disabilities, in outdoor activities that they would not be able to do otherwise. The camp program is offered through the Therapeutic Recreation concentration at The University of Tennessee. During the past 32 years’ thousands of campers and students have benefitted from the camp experience.

The Koinonia Foundation is expanding its reach following a review of community needs and opportunities gaps for children and adults with multiple disabilities. New monthly programs have been held for individuals 18 years and older with disabilities. The friendship and enrichment programs include game night, dance night, movie night, family picnic and Christmas in July. These newly developed programs seek to enhance the quality of life for children and adults with multiple disabilities and their families. For more information on Koinonia Foundation, please visit www.kftn.org.

Taste of the South, a Washington, D.C.-based charity founded in 1982, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Taste of the South has donated over \$4 million to Southern charities. TOTS is privileged to have an Honorary Congressional Host Committee consisting of the Members of Congress from 13 Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. At the event, each state committee sponsors a table featuring regional cuisine and specialty products donated from home-state vendors and organizations for the more than 2,000 guests in attendance. For more information on Taste of the South, please visit www.tasteofthesouth.org.