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-PRESS RELEASE-

Tampa Disabilities Advocate Receives Top Award Thursday at Capitol

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) honored Sarah Goldman of Tampa on Tuesday, March 21, during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day at the Capitol where she received the Eighth Annual Idelio Valdes Leadership and Advocacy Award. The award recognizes an individual with a developmental disability who has demonstrated outstanding advocacy efforts and has helped develop partnerships for the facilitation of community integration, employment and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Goldman was selected to receive the prestigious award because of her exemplary personal and professional achievements, which have resulted in a better understanding of the needs of people with developmental disabilities as well as influenced legislative decisions. During the 2015 and 2016 legislative session, Goldman interned with state representatives and FDDC. During these internships, she created a House Resolution to make March Cerebral Palsy Awareness month in Florida and was recognized on the House floor. She also has helped testify in House and Senate committees on bills impacting people with disabilities as well as presented at national conferences during the 25th anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act.

Goldman currently works as a district aide for Rep. Kathleen Peters (R. Pinellas) and serves as the secretary for The Able Trust's Youth Program's Alumni Association. She believes that all individuals should be included and plans on running for a House seat in the next five years to continue her work for people with disabilities.

“Sarah is a phenomenal advocate for all individuals, and has the most passionate heart for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has truly devoted her entire life to self- advocacy, but most importantly, the rights of others. As an individual with cerebral palsy, Sarah faces her own daily challenges overcoming adversity, but despite her own barriers, she fights on the frontline as a leader, paving the way for more rights and better opportunities for other individuals with similar struggles,” said Rose Withers, clinical supervisor at Spectrum House, Inc., who nominated Goldman for the award.

Named in honor of Idelio Valdes, a member of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and a self-advocate who passed away in 2009, the award is presented during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day – an annual commemoration hosted by the FDDC and The Arc of Florida that serves as a forum to generate awareness and provide information about the importance of inclusion and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. For more information on the FDDC, visit www.fddc.org. For more information on The Arc of Florida, visit www.arcflorida.org

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