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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“A Life Worth Living”
Inaugural Wine + Film Festival is coming to Vero Beach
June 9-12, 2016**

Vero Beach, FL (December 17, 2015) — The Vero Beach Wine + Film Festival scheduled for June 9-12, 2016 is the only U.S. wine and film festival of its kind outside of California. Sonoma International Film Festival is an official partner of this inaugural event. It’s taking everything Vero Beach is known for – art, natural beauty, eco-awareness, toe-baring lifestyle, emerging chefs and coastal hospitality – and celebrating fine wines and remarkable films. The festival theme “A Life Worth Living” is inspired by the event beneficiary, Suncoast Mental Health Center. The center offers supportive services to children and families along the Treasure Coast, including St. Lucie, Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee counties.

“We are thrilled to bring this full-bodied weekend to Vero Beach,” said Jerusha Stewart, Festival Founder and Director. “With a steady growth of off-season visitors, it’s the perfect time to launch a new cultural event. Elite Airways begins jet service in December between Vero Beach and Newark, providing easy access to urban sophisticates looking for a memorable Florida getaway.”

The festival kicks off Thursday, June 9th with the “Vino Veritas Vintner” Dinners, featuring collaborative chef teams and guests vintners from around the world. To date, Citrus Grillhouse and Gloria Estefan’s Costa d’Este have been confirmed as host locations of the dinners. Participating culinary personalities include local restaurant favorite Chef Scott Varricchio, chef-owner of Citrus Grillhouse and Chef Josie Smith Malave, two-time Top Chef Contestant.

Momentum will continue as Brian Callahan, the 2nd youngest Master Sommelier in the Hall of Masters leads festival guests on a tour of winemaking regions during the “Cinema d’Costa.” At the Grand Wine Tasting event, guests will sip as they see the newly released independent Italian film noir: “Rewined,” directed by award-winning international director Ferdinando Vicentini Orgnani.

Guests will have the opportunity to view over 35 films by international, national and regional filmmakers. Filmmakers, producers, and cast members will share their independent film making adventures while sampling from our guest vintners’ portfolios. Continuing the “Life Worth Living” weekend experience, internationally recognized oceanographer, Dr. Eddie Widder of Ocean Research and Conservation Association will host a “water + wine” special presentation.

Special Festival Programs include:

“NEXT UP!” – Young Filmmakers Competition for ages 18 and younger.

“Vero Visions” – Films for and about the Treasure Coast, including those produced by Vero Beach filmmakers

“Vero After Dark” – Select screenings of experimental and non-narrative works

Just a 90-minute drive from Orlando and Miami, Vero Beach is Florida’s “Hamptons of the South” (*Wall Street Journal*) and the “Top Beach Escape” (*USA Today*), making it the perfect backdrop for a marriage of wine and film.

Festival Passes are available at vbwff.com or by calling 772.217.3786 (Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST).

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VBWFF Festival Partners: Sonoma International Film Festival, Treasure Coast Sotheby’s International Realty, Indian River Press Journal, TCPalm.com, Patisserie, Morningstar Custom Printing, Idlewild Co, Riverside Theatre, Cultural Council of Indian River County, Regus, The Alexis Agency, Kite Tax Lien Capital, White Glove Moving & Storage, ORCA, and Vero Beach Art Club.

VBWFF Festival Venues: Riverside Theatre, Vero Beach Museum of Art , Costa d’Este, Citrus Grillhouse, Heritage Center, Osceola Bistro, Project Space 1785, Blue Star, The Wave, Orchid Island Brewery

ABOUT SUNCOAST MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Suncoast Mental Health Center, Inc. provides best-practice and research-based assessment, counseling and supportive services to children and families in the Treasure

Coast area. The Center provides services for children and adults experiencing behavioral and/or mental health issues. Visit: suncoastmentalhealth.org

Suncoast Mental Health Center, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) organization, serving the mental health needs of residents of Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie and Okeechobee counties, since 1998. Suncoast Mental Health center, Inc. is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).