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CONTACT:

Don Stark
Turks & Caicos Reef Fund
(649) 347-8455
DonStark@TCReef.org

David Stone
Turks and Caicos Reef Fund
(649) 346-3111
DavidStone@TCReef.org

TCRF HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 2nd ANNUAL FUNDRAISER AND RAISES OVER \$17,000

29 January 2013, Providenciales, TCI – The Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF) hosted its 2nd Annual Cocktail Party Fundraiser on 26 January 2013 at the Grace Bay Club. Over 140 people attended the event where they were greeted with a glass of champagne generously donated by the Wine Cellar. The guests enjoyed a sampling of the wonderful hors d'oeuvres while being serenaded by David and Shara Bowen. The event raised \$17,280.00 for the TCRF through ticket sales, a silent auction and a three-night Parrot Cay raffle kindly donated by Parrot Cay Resort. The funds raised at the event will help the non-profit continue its work toward helping to preserve and protect the biodiverse marine environment of the Turks & Caicos Islands.

“We want to thank everyone who attended for supporting us and the various businesses and individuals who donated items for the silent auction, said Don Stark, Chairman of the TCRF. “I have to extend a special thank you to the Grace Bay Club management and staff who helped to make the event such a big success and to David and Shara Bowen who generously volunteered to play at the event. Congratulations also go out to Anthony Gruchot of Providenciales who was the lucky winner of the Parrot Cay raffle prize.”

Added David Stone, Deputy Chairman of the TCRF, “We were very pleased to see how community support has grown for our organization and the work we have undertaken thus far. We are also very encouraged that the DEMA Director, Ms. Kathleen Wood, the Minister of the Environment, the Honorable Porsha

Stubbs-Smith and the Governor, His Excellency Ric Todd all attended this event and expressed their support of our efforts. We hope this is a signal that the new government is recognizing the critical role the environment plays in every aspect of life on our islands and to all of us living and working here. We look forward to continuing to work with them on a responsible and comprehensive environmental strategy going forward.”

Added Mr. Stark, “Our goal is to put 85 cents of every dollar raised into various projects we have underway throughout the islands. In fact, we raised \$17,280 at the event last Saturday and, after expenses, we are able to put 86.4% of those dollars, or nearly \$15,000 into project work. Our biggest project right now is the installation, maintenance and expansion of boat moorings around all the islands, but especially in the Marine National Parks. We have already supplied materials to Grand Turk and Salt Cay, which they have used to replace 16 dive and snorkel boat moorings around those two islands. We have also repaired or replaced 8 dive and snorkel boat moorings around Provo in the past six weeks and will do many more in the coming months.” Proceeds from the event will also help to fund improvements and maintenance of snorkel trails on the islands. The TCRF is also expanding its educational efforts through support of Henry the Conch’s outreach program to the children of the Turks and Caicos to help them better understand why the coral reefs around these islands are critical to a healthy island and economy. Other educational outreach programs are also being started by the TCRF.

Another new project that these funds will help to advance is an effort to create a fishery for the invasive lionfish species in the TCI by incentivizing the local fisherman to catch lionfish, which have no closed season, no catch limit and no size limit. TCRF is working with the Department of Environment and Maritime Affairs, the Fishery Advisory Committee, local fish processors and individual fishermen to create an ongoing source of supply of lionfish for sale to local restaurants. The TCRF is also working with local restaurants to identify those interested in placing lionfish on their menus. “Many local restaurants are interested in serving lionfish,” said David Stone, “so the challenge we are addressing now is ensuring there is a ongoing source of supply for them. We hope to have this supply chain completed in the very near future so that we can help to manage the population of lionfish, which threatens all of our other commercial fisheries.”

About TCRF

Founded in 2010, the Turks & Caicos Reef Fund is an all volunteer-run organization that provides funding for education, research and conservation programs to individuals, organizations and agencies that help to preserve and protect the marine environment of the Turks & Caicos Islands. Our goal is to have at least 85% of all funds raised through voluntary contributions from divers

and snorkelers visiting the Turks & Caicos Islands directed to the Fund's programs.

Anyone wishing to donate or assist the TCRF in any way can contact them through their website, www.TCReef.org. Scuba divers visiting the islands are encouraged to make a \$10 donation through the purchase of a dive tag that can be attached to their dive gear to show their support. Snorkelers visiting the islands can show their support through the \$5 purchase of a pink or blue silicone wristband. A complete list of outlets for TCRF merchandise can be found on the organization's website.

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