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TCRF HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 1st ANNUAL COCKTAIL PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION

21 February 2012, Providenciales, TCI – The Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF) hosted its 1st Annual Cocktail Party Reception on 18 February 2012 at the Veranda Resort. Over 120 people attended the event where they were greeted with a glass of champagne generously donated by the Wine Cellar and entertained by David and Shara Bowen. The guests enjoyed a sampling of the wonderful hors d'oeuvres, including tasty lionfish fingers. The event raised over \$8,300 for the TCRF through ticket sales, a silent auction and a three-day/two night Parrot Cay raffle magnanimously provided 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 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 Veranda 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 Steve Flowers of Providenciales who was the lucky winner of the Parrot Cay prize.”

Added David Stone, Deputy Chairman of the TCRF, “we are very excited by the warm community reception and attendance at the party. We hope it will become one of the social events of the year on Provo.”

Proceeds from the event will help to fund the various projects the TCRF has underway and planned throughout the islands, including expanding the dive boat moorings, adding and improving snorkel trails on the islands, and continuing to expand the Blue Flag Beach Certification program.

A 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. They are also working with several local fish processors to ensure that when fisherman start bringing in lionfish, the processors will be prepared to process it. The TCRF is offering to guarantee a minimum price of \$15.00 per pound for lionfish delivered by the fish processors and the fish processors have committed to paying local fishermen \$5.00 per pound for lionfish they bring in, which is more than they are paid per pound for both lobster and conch. The final piece to this effort is directed toward encouraging local restaurants to put lionfish on their menus. By working with all three parts of the supply chain, the TCRF hopes to establish a thriving supply and demand of lionfish to be eaten by guests at many local restaurants.

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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