

## **Theodore “Ted” Granger Honored with 2026 Chiles Advocate Award**

*The Chiles Advocate Award acknowledges a legacy of leadership and commitment to advancing child welfare in Florida*

**FLORIDA – February 17, 2026** – Theodore “Ted” Granger, former President & CEO of United Way of Florida, has been named the 2026 recipient of the prestigious Chiles Advocate Award. This award is presented in honor of former Florida Governor Lawton Chiles and his wife, Rhea, recognizing individuals who have demonstrated exceptional advocacy for the well-being of children and families across the state and around the nation.

Granger has been a relentless advocate for Florida’s youth. His early career as an attorney in the Florida Senate and soon after, a lobbyist for the Florida Chamber of Commerce, provided him with knowledge, experience and connections that led him to United Way of Florida. As President & CEO of United Way of Florida for more than 20 years, Granger spearheaded partnerships with state-level child advocacy organizations to achieve legislative wins for Florida’s children. Throughout his career, Granger has contributed to many efforts promoting the well-being of children and their families including but not limited to Florida Early Learning Consortium, Policy Group for Florida’s Families & Children, Volunteer Florida Foundation, and Florida Nonprofit Alliance.

Though Granger officially retired in 2021, his commitment to improving the lives of children in Florida has not wavered. He continues to graciously provide leadership, legal counsel and advocacy expertise to other organizations.

“Florida is stronger because of Ted’s decades of service and his unwavering belief that children come first,” said Erin Smeltzer, president and CEO of the Children’s Forum, the organizing partner of Children’s Week Florida. “Ted’s leadership is a key example of how we are all stronger together. Through collaboration and connection, we can build a better future for Florida’s children.”

The 2026 Chiles Advocate Award will be presented at the Annual Children’s Week Florida Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Monday, February 23, where state leaders, policymakers and child advocates gather to celebrate those shaping the future for Florida’s children and teens. The Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony is sponsored by Walmart for the second year in a row.

For more information about Children’s Week Florida, please visit [childrensweek.org](https://childrensweek.org) or call 850-487-6300.

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**About Children's Week Florida**

Children's Week Florida is the largest annual event held in the state that celebrates its commitment to children, youth, and advocates. The event, held each year in Tallahassee during the legislative session, unites young children, teens, legislators, educators, families, advocates, and community leaders to celebrate Florida's children and ensure every child is healthy, ready to learn, and able to reach their full potential.