

THE FIRST ✿ THE ONLY

VeroBeach

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*Three generations enjoy family time
in a new home on John's Island Sound*

Home Sweet Home





Making prints of their hands is colorful, messy fun for budding artists at Childcare Resources. New multi-purpose furniture, shelving and easels were made possible thanks to a grant from the John's Island Foundation.



Ellie McCabe, Founder

Lifting Up Lives

THE JOHN'S ISLAND FOUNDATION HAS BEEN FUNDING CAPITAL NEEDS
AND BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS FOR 20 YEARS

BY ANN TAYLOR

It's been 20 years since a handful of John's Island neighbors gathered around Ellie McCabe's dining room table, intent on forming a foundation that would fund the capital needs of agencies serving economically disadvantaged Indian River County residents. While other charitable organizations were focused on programs and services, basic infrastructure needs were going unmet.

The philanthropic-minded founders were on a mission to change that. They consulted with an attorney, and, after dotting

the i's and crossing the t's, filed the paperwork, hoping the newly formed John's Island Foundation would make an impact.

And what an impact it has had!

Over the course of the past two decades, the foundation has awarded grants totaling \$11 million to local nonprofits for a variety of essential items, including buildings, additions, roofs, technological equipment, vehicles and appliances of every size, make and model.

The foundation has carried out its mission effectively and quietly. There's been no fanfare, no confetti

**“What we have done
for ourselves alone
dies with us;
what we have done
for others and the
world remains and is
immortal.”**

— ALBERT PIKE,
AMERICAN AUTHOR AND POET

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MAGAZINE



Crossover Mission co-founders Cathy De Schouwer and Antoine Jennings are grateful for a grant that funded two passenger vans, allowing the nonprofit to set up daily and weekly transportation schedules that local youth involved in the basketball-academic mentoring program such as Avonti, Chauncey and Kabari can count on.

or parade down Main Street, simply a from-the-heart response to an annual appeal from foundation members, currently numbering 500 and growing.

“We are blessed to have a community that embodies the spirit of giving and residents who so generously support our charitable mission. They are the X factor that makes everything we do possible,” says foundation president Emily Sherwood, a smile in her voice.

“To my knowledge, we’re the only one in Indian River County to give grants strictly for capital needs, and it’s easy to see how what we give translates directly into how we improve the lives of those in need.

“When we provide a housing unit for a low-income senior or a homeless person, he or she can live in dignity and comfort instead of in a car or on the street. When we provide a customized van for delivering meals to homebound seniors, those individuals can receive the appropriate nourishment. When we fund computers for after-school programs, kids can become proficient in technology, a skill they will need to succeed in life. All of that makes a difference.”

Crossover Mission’s Antoine Jennings can testify to that. Thanks to a recent grant from the John’s Island Foundation, the basketball-academic mentoring program he and Cathy De Schouwer co-founded six years ago was able to purchase passenger vans, allowing them to set up daily and weekly transportation schedules for local youth.

“The majority of the parents are working or simply struggle to find the flexibility needed to keep their kids engaged regularly, so Crossover



Foundation president Emily Sherwood feels blessed to be part of a generous community that believes in lifting others up.

has taken on the responsibility to make sure that the kids are receiving all the support they need, which starts and ends with getting them to where they need to be,” Jennings explains. “Having the vans allows us to pick them up from multiple schools throughout the county, transport them to our center for academic mentoring support and then to one of the local gyms for basketball training. Without the vans our entire program could be in jeopardy.”

Other nonprofits struggle with similar situations. Without financial support, their programs and services would lack the necessary brick-and-mortar underpinnings. As Sherwood notes, “The things we all take for granted are just not possible for a lot of people. Our capital funding provides agencies with



Thanks to the foundation, Every Dream Has a Price was able to provide a veteran with a decent place to live.



Pat Brier chairs the foundation's Grants Committee, whose members devote their time to research and assess funding requests from agencies serving economically disadvantaged county residents.

MARTINA TANNERY



Stretching and moving at the newly renovated Senior Resource Association promotes energy and a happy feeling.

ing, housing or other basic human needs, they offer hope for a brighter future, and that future is dependent on both operational and capital funding.

So, how exactly does a non-profit go about receiving a John's Island Foundation grant? It starts with requesting and filling out an application form. Once the form is completed and returned, members of the Grants Committee pore over the paperwork assessing the purpose, measureable outcome, cost and overall health of the agency. It's a thorough, time-consuming process; it's also an educational eye-opener.

"This year we have 51 people on the committee. It's amazing so many want to get involved. They become informed about what the agencies do," says Pat Brier, vice president and chair of the Grants Committee, noting that by the time January rolls around, site visits fill the calendar.

"When committee members go out to the agency, they know what questions to ask and what to look for. They get to see firsthand the delivery of programs and services. The agencies have to be following

what they need to help them lead productive lives."

There's no question there is work to be done. The latest United Way ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report released in February 2019 showed that of the 55,427 households in Indian River County, 51% struggle to pay for basic needs. They are people you run into every day: the cashiers, clerks, mechanics, educators; they are the working poor who, try as hard as they do, still can't make ends meet.

That's where the agencies play a critical role. Whether their programs and services provide nourishment, educational train-

2019 GRANT RECIPIENTS

ALZHEIMER & PARKINSON ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

\$12,500 – to purchase shelving and storage and to replace countertops and have the facility interior painted

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

\$22,290 – to purchase office furniture for the Vero Beach office that the foundation helped renovate last year

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

\$50,000 – to support the building of a new Boys & Girls Club in Fellsmere

CAMP HAVEN

\$24,775 – to purchase hurricane windows and a sunshade for outdoor exercise equipment

CHILDCARE RESOURCES

\$24,460 – to purchase multi-purpose furniture, art easels, shelving, aquarium tanks and a projector

DASIE HOPE CENTER

\$17,970 – to purchase bleachers, desktop computers, software, desks and chairs

EVERY DREAM HAS A PRICE

\$50,000 – to build housing that supports people who are referred by the Mental Health Court of Indian River County

GIFFORD YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

\$50,000 – to purchase 8 SMART boards, desktop computers and security cameras

HOPE FOR FAMILIES CENTER

\$50,000 – to renovate the facility and create a children's reading room

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY HEALTHY START COALITION

\$18,344 – to purchase technology and software

KINDERGARTEN READINESS COLLABORATIVE

\$10,000 – to purchase office furniture and a data management system

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

\$20,000 – to purchase waiting room furniture

REDLANDS CHRISTIAN MIGRANT ASSOCIATION

\$31,343 – to purchase security cameras and a sunshade for a children's playground at

Children's House in Vero Beach SAMARITAN CENTER

\$28,975 – to replace the interior flooring of the facility

SENIOR RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

\$50,448 – to purchase a delivery van that has both hot and cold capabilities for the Meals on Wheels program

ST. FRANCIS MANOR

\$33,850 – to purchase storm doors and refrigerators for senior apartments

SUBSTANCE AWARENESS CENTER

\$28,700 – to provide improvements to the Men's Assistance House and the Women's Shelter

SUNCOAST MENTAL HEALTH

\$7,958 – to purchase banners, children's tables and office furniture

THE ARC OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

\$37,252 – to replace windows, soffits and siding on a client's group home

THE SOURCE

\$25,000 – to purchase a van to support the Dining with Dignity program that supplies meals to under-served children in after-school programs in Indian River County

TREASURE COAST COMMUNITY HEALTH

\$25,000 – to purchase office furniture

TREASURE COAST FOOD BANK

\$16,500 – to purchase a forklift

TREASURE COAST HOMELESS SERVICES COUNCIL

\$12,849 – to replace the air conditioners and ovens in clients' homes

UNITED AGAINST POVERTY

\$48,936 – to purchase tables, chairs and five SMART boards for the STEP program

VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION

\$27,984 – to renovate the mobile health care van that serves the Gifford community

WHOLE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

\$24,000 – to purchase a client transportation van



The foundation provides funds for capital needs, such as the VNA mobile health care van that serves the Gifford community.

their mission and prove to us they're capable of providing what they promise."

United Against Poverty (UP) has done just that for 16 years, and executive director Annabel Robertson gives the John's Island Foundation much of the credit. "When Austin and Ginny Hunt founded what was then known as Harvest Food Outreach, the foundation was instrumental in getting it started. Over the years they have been tremendously supportive in critical moments of our efforts to lift people out of poverty, allowing us to increase our membership program to 650 people a day in Indian River County," says Robertson.

"Thanks to a recent foundation grant funding the fresh-food cooler system in our new 46,000-square-foot center, that number is expected to increase to 1,000. Capital is very transformational for us. We can't do without the foundation's support."

Other agencies echo the same sentiment. Case in point: Last summer the Dasie Bridgewater Hope Center, an after-school program for children in the Wabasso area, received a foundation grant that



Last year a John's Island Foundation grant to St. Francis Manor provided funding for new apartment storm doors and refrigerators.



Thanks to a grant from the foundation, much needed renovations were made possible at the Boys & Girls Clubs where youngsters receive academic help and mentoring.

provided for much-needed equipment. An earlier grant allowed for the renovation of Kidz Cafe, where an efficient, restaurant-style operation not only feeds children nutritious meals, but also teaches them how to prepare them – a classic example of the familiar adage, “Give a man a fish, and he’ll eat for a day; teach a man to fish, and he’ll feed himself for a lifetime.”

Brier gives the agencies high marks for the work they do. “When you go back and see the results, the clients the agencies serve, you get tied into the fact that they’re really touching peoples’ lives. Relationships are formed, and, as a result, some of our members end up volunteering their expertise and experience by serving on the board.

“I love working with the people at the agencies; they have a heart for what they do. To me, they’re the ones that do all the hard work. We may give the gift, but they’re the people who who bring joy and hope to families.” Brier witnessed that joy and hope firsthand when she spent a morning riding along with Senior Resource Association Meals on Wheels volunteers in the

old delivery van, since replaced by a new one made possible by a grant from the foundation. “Not only did seniors receive nutritious food and get a daily wellness check, for some we were the only people they would see that day. It was a humbling experience and made me realize just how important our donations are.”

When St. Francis Manor, which has provided affordable, independent living for seniors on limited incomes since the early 1970s, needed to purchase storm doors for the 18 new one-bedroom apartments, a commercial refrigerator for the Social Hall and seven washing machines and dryers for use throughout the 20th Street campus, the foundation responded by granting the necessary funding.

“Because of the age of our community, we constantly have the need to upgrade the apartments and grounds. Over the years the John’s Island Foundation has helped make St. Francis Manor the place it is today, and we couldn’t be more grateful,” says interim executive director Bonnie Matz, who has a special relationship with St. Francis



2020 board members: (seated) Lila Stillman, Pat Brier, Emily Sherwood, Margie Wheeler and Frances Cramb (standing) Don Kittell, David Harris, Stevan Trooboff, John Hamill, Don Blair, Andy Nickle and James Daly; missing from photo: Herb Aspbury

Manor, as her grandmother was a resident there.

Sherwood points out that there are times the foundation funds capital expenses at the same time the John's Island Community Service League funds operating expenses for the same nonprofit. While their missions may differ, the goal is the same – to lift others up. Collaboration is part of the conversation going forward.

“When you look at what the two organizations in John's Island are

doing, it's almost mind-boggling,” Sherwood enthuses. “The league and foundation are providing millions of dollars in support to this community, and it really just comes out of the generosity of John's Island residents. They see the needs and they respond; they really do open up their hearts.”

Sherwood, who has devoted most of her adult life to community service, feels it's important to recognize that volunteer organizations build on the successes of their

predecessors. “Ellie McCabe had the vision and leadership skills in 1999 to put together a board that was so effective in articulating our mission and accomplishing all that was needed to raise funds and support agencies. We've been fortunate to have had boards that continued her legacy and record of success.”

After 20 years, it's time for John's Island Foundation members to celebrate, pop Champagne corks and toss confetti. Their generosity has changed lives for the better. ❁