

PEOPLE

John's Island group's top donors thanked for leading the way



Don and Mary Blair.



Phil Barnes with Tina and Andy Nickle.



Molly Butler Hart with John and Pam Mariani.

PHOTOS: KAILA JONES

BY MARY SCHENKEL
Staff Writer

Members of the John's Island Foundation Leadership Circle were feted at a reception at the John's Island Club to thank them for their significant philanthropy. The donations of the 125 Leadership Circle members, who annually contribute \$5,000 or more, currently represent

70 percent of the funds raised by the foundation.

The reception was sponsored by Northern Trust Bank and John's Island Real Estate, along with John and Pam Mariani, who again donated exceptional Castello Banfi wines from their Tuscany vineyard, which paired beautifully with the generous spread prepared by Executive Chef John Farnsworth and his team.



Alan and Maureen Maguire with John and Darlene Scott.



William and Lynda Glavin.

grants to 23 charitable agencies totaling over \$915,000. Our investments support delivery of critical services now and for years to come," said Blair, noting that the foundation grants fund capital investments, such as assets and infrastructure, rather than operational expenses.

Citing two examples, Blair said a \$50,000 grant to SafeSpace helped build a shelter here for victims of domestic violence, and a \$75,000 grant to Youth Guidance Mentoring Academy, matched by a John's Island couple, funded a new roof.

Pointing out that since 2018, the foundation has granted \$125,000 to Youth Guidance, Blair invited Phil Barnes, its executive director, to speak about the impact of those grants.

"Our goal is to help children and young adults break the cycle of poverty through life skills, vocational training, and character development," said Barnes, who joined in March 2020, just as COVID hit.

That April, JIF funded a new AC system, which enabled them to offer a summer camp with engaging

"We weren't sure how the pandemic would affect our fundraising, so we took a cautious approach over the last two years. But I'm happy to say that the Johns Island community has continued to respond very generously to growing needs in our county," said Don Blair, JIF board president.

"In our last fiscal year, we made

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Amanda Robinson, Bob Gibb and Rennie Gibb.

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Margie Wheeler and Francie Cramb.



Matt and Becky Rundels.



Sam and JoAnn Thomas.



George and Marlen Higgs.

activities such as science and art projects, bicycle repair and boat mechanics.

"In fall of 2020, when schools were shut down, we launched an all-day learning center," said Barnes. All the children enrolled in that program advanced to the next grade level on time.

"Now we can focus on our future. We are launching a capital campaign to renovate the interior of our building."

Plans to improve the 8,600-square-foot facility, which was built in 1961, include building a commercial kitchen, a state-of-the-art tech lab, and a workshop to expand

their pre-apprenticeship program.

"But this is just our story. Whether it's our veterans, the homeless or children, I sincerely believe the capital improvements made possible by the Johns Island Foundation are saving lives in this community every single day. We are making tremendous progress, but there is still much work to be done," said Barnes.

"You've heard it before: It takes a village. But every village needs a builder. And tonight, on behalf of all the nonprofit organizations in Indian River County, I want to thank the Johns Island Foundation and the individuals in this room for being our builder," said Barnes. ■

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James and Theresa Kilman with Marie and Jack Murphy.



James Marver and Shirin Kaufman with Shari and Jeff Wapler.



Paul and Michelle Julian.



Ron and Nancy Rosner.

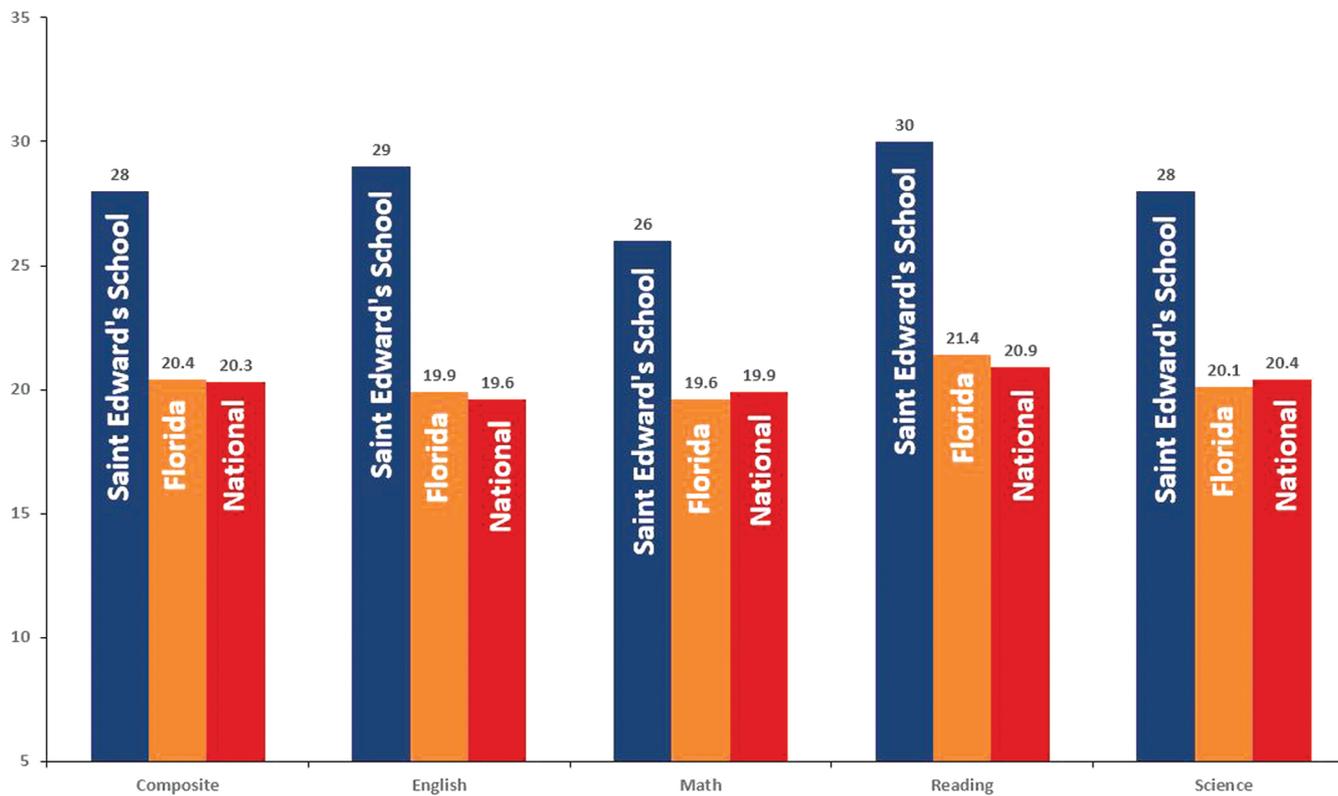


Michael and Kathie Pierce.

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