

PHILANTHROPY MATTERS

School Shooting Casts Shadow on Charity Tour



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The impact of the recent school shooting tragedy in nearby Parkland, Florida was felt even closer to home during the Foundation's visits with four first-time grant applicants in Homestead and Florida City on the final Charity Tour of the season last week.

Impressive MAST

Our first stop was MAST (Medical Academy for Science & Technology) Academy, a rigorous public charter high school that prepares students for medical school. The principal shared that because the teachers and 700 students are feeling particularly uneasy about strangers on campus since the shooting, she's informed the entire school about our visit ahead of time. We all donned Visitor Pass stickers so everyone would recognize us as authorized guests before we entered the campus. In no time, we were refocused on the award-winning MAST program, which inspired three "impressive"s, two "amazing"s, and "incredible" and "exceptional" in feedback emails received from the group following the tour.

Start Off Smart

Our second stop was the new Homestead Police Department building in the city's Historic Downtown. Community Grant

recipient Start Off Smart, which works side by side with officers on domestic abuse cases, graciously offered to host our meetings with two organizations that also collaborate with the local law enforcement. It worked out well that we were also able to present our Small Urgent Response Grant (SURG) to send officers to train as Active Shooter Threat Instructors to the Chief of Police while there.

According to the SURG application, that danger is chillingly real. In the two days following the Parkland shooting "every school within the City of Homestead had some form of threat...this resulted in multiple arrests and various weapons confiscated."

References to the tragedy came up again in presentations from Kristi House, which helps victims of childhood trauma, and the Institute of Child & Family Health, which applied for a program to prevent younger siblings of habitual and violent juvenile offenders from following in their footsteps. Homestead's arrest rates for such youth are among the highest in the county and state.

All Smiles

Our last stop was all smiles, as we boarded the Caring for Miami Project Smile Mobile Dental Clinic. It was parked for the morning at Reef Tropical's Florida City location, the staff of which has been helping with Caring Miami's backpack nutrition program for local schools. There we met the head of the charity and discovered he is a proud graduate of MAST Academy. It was a welcome reminder of all the local kids we can provide the opportunity and foundation to help make South Florida a better place, and a positive and inspirational end to our tour.



A Small Urgent Response Grant was awarded during last week's Homestead Charity Tour to Start Off Smart, a non-profit which partners directly with the Homestead Police Department, to train four officers as Active Shooter Threat Instructors for local police forces in the wake of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Pictured (left to right): HPD Chief Alexander E. Rolle, Jr., ORCF Grants Committee Chair Janie Sims and Executive Director Yuri Mikolay, and Detective Fernando Morales.



Last week's Charity Tour group included: (back, left to right) Jerry Fischer, Jay Holmes; (middle) Lois Delligatti, Yuri Mikolay, Cynthia Lee, Steve Woodsum, Patty Davidson; (front) Kay Fischer, Nanette Elenbaas, Janie Sims, Jill Sullivan, Linda Owens and Amy Upjohn.



Project Smile: Caring for Miami's Project Smile Mobile Dental Unit is helping to reduce emergency room visits for dental issues by uninsured low income families and looking to expand services in Homestead, Florida City and the Upper Keys where a great need has been identified by local health clinics.