Ready, Set, Bid!  
Grant Committee is Gearing Up

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The excitement of All Charities Weekend is finally here! A Grants Committee of your peers has been meeting, studying, visiting, vetting, questioning, evaluating and waiting for the numbers to roll in since October. That’s when the more than 90 Community Grant applications for funding totaling $2.45 million were collected. The Foundation’s share of All Charities proceeds is distributed to charities in the Upper Keys, Homestead and Florida City to projects benefitting Youth, Education, Health & Family Services and Community.

Just last week the Grants Committee was joined by fellow community members for another round of site visits in Homestead and Florida City. First stop was a Redlands Christian Migrant Association.

Child Development Center for a presentation by Miami Children’s Museum. The museum’s experts have applied to bring a program of educational opportunities to workers at RCMA’s numerous sites. The grant would offer workshops and classroom resources to help integrate science, technology, engineering and art concepts into daily activities.

Next up was our first visit to Miami Dade College’s Homestead Campus. Of the 12,000 students at the Homestead Campus, 73 percent work while attending, 72 percent are low income and 65 percent are first generation college students. The college has applied to begin offering their Hospitality Management degree at the Homestead Campus, noting that hospitality is the largest single sector employing Miami Dade residents and accounts for more than half of jobs in Monroe County.

At the Homestead YMCA, we checked in on last year’s Drowning Prevention grant, which is providing swimming lessons for hundreds of disadvantaged children who attend Le Jardin preschools in the area. It was great fun to see the lessons in action, but troubling to know that Florida leads the nation with the most child drownings by more than double the next state. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children four and under. So far, the Y has taught 364 preschoolers to swim and are on schedule to have taught 480 by March with our funding.

After each tour we request and carefully review feedback on each of the sites from community members who join us. One member had this to say about our last tour. “What an incredible lineup of worthy charities we toured yesterday! The passion of the people at these organizations was contagious and I came back very enthused by their work as well as proud of Ocean Reef for the work it does to fund them.”

If you haven’t been able to get out there and see the work you’re funding in the surrounding areas for yourself, there are some great reminders of why you’re really bidding (in addition to this year’s incredibly amazing items) at ofound.org. Thank you in advance for your generosity, it makes a difference.

Homestead YMCA is providing swimming lessons as a part of last year’s Drowning Prevention grant.

The first presentation was at the Redlands Christian Migrant Association Child Development Center.

Members visit Miami Dade College’s Homestead Campus.

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