Thanksgiving is a time of generosity, but for Ocean Reef Club, the spirit of giving lasts all year long through our participation in the Extra Helpings Program. With a dozen restaurants on the island, even with the most expert menu planning, there is often surplus prepared food that would normally be discarded. Since May of this year, we have been able to distribute that food to needy people in the Upper Keys and Homestead through Feeding South Florida, a non-profit organization that coordinates distribution of food to various charitable feeding programs throughout the region.

"It's a great feeling to know that the surplus foods from the Club's kitchens never need go to waste again," said Chef Philippe, "In the six months since we launched the Extra Helpings, we have been able to provide 7,720 meals to those in need in communities outside the gates."

Throughout the week, Ocean Reef Club restaurants deep freeze leftover prepared food in aluminum containers, then transport it to the commissary for pick-up each Tuesday. From there, the food is distributed to two Feeding South Florida member agencies, which have been trained in stringent food safety handling measures. Burton Memorial United Memorial Church's food pantry provides free food, along with household items and groceries to thousands of Upper Keys residents in their times of need and economic hardship. Chapman Partnership's Homeless Assistance Center in Homestead empowers homeless men, women and children to build a positive future by providing meals as well as emergency shelter, health and dental care, day care, job training, job placement, and assistance with securing stable housing.

"We are so grateful for this partnership," said Alicia Press, Program Supervisor for Feeding South Florida. "Your participation means so much to those families and individuals in the Upper Keys and Homestead—two areas where it is often difficult to get access to assistance for those who need it most. Thank you for your helping us fight to end hunger and feed hope within these communities."

Ocean Reef Foundation was instrumental in forging this alliance with Ocean Reef Club, Feeding South Florida and the charitable agencies. Since 2009, the Foundation has allocated $167,000 in Community Grants to local food pantries and Feeding South Florida. "This initiative to fight hunger was a true collaborative effort," said Janie Sims, Co-Chair of the Grants Committee for the Ocean Reef Foundation. "We’re so pleased with the generosity of Ocean Reef residents who help fund nutritionally balanced meals through their Foundation contributions."

For information on how to contribute to Extra Helpings and other charitable outreach efforts, contact the Ocean Reef Community Foundation at (305) 367-0747.