

Another Seabreeze Publication

# Shadow Wood Charitable Foundation Awards A Record \$1.46 Million In Scholarships, Grants To Local Charities

The Shadow Wood Charitable Foundation (SWCF) awarded a record \$1.46 million in grants to 14 charities and the two scholarship programs it supports. The grant money is being invested in worthy initiatives that address housing, food, education and health and human services.

“Our vision is for all Southwest Florida residents to have a decent place to live, adequate provisions to sustain them, and an opportunity to fulfill their life goals,” said SWCF President Steve Zentz.

SWCF raised \$1.64 million in the fiscal year ended March 31 through special events and donations from Shadow Wood residents and other benefactors.

Nearly 98 cents on every dollar donated to SWCF goes directly to charities and scholarships. In addition to fulfilling 2023 grant requests, the foundation provided charities with \$99,000 in pandemic emergency funding and \$109,500 in Hurricane Ian relief.

“For two decades, the foundation has given Shadow Wood residents a simple and trustworthy way to express their compassion and support for our neighbors in need,” Zentz said. “As a result, we are now helping to serve more than 30,000 people in Lee and Collier counties.”

The grant checks were issued, and 24 scholarship winners announced at an April 17 reception and

celebration concert on the SWCC driving range. The following are SWCF award recipients.



## Housing

**Habitat For Humanity Of Lee And Hendry Counties** received \$386,100 in grants to build a new home in Partnership Place, an affordable housing area under development in Bonita Springs. The grants will also be used to construct an additional home in partnership with a local church, and to assist with housing needs and increased costs due to the impact from Hurricane Ian.

**Hearts & Homes For Veterans** is using \$105,000 in grants to help local veterans cover housing assistance including first month’s rent, utility payments, or a once yearly subsidy to help vets avoid homelessness. As part of Hurricane Ian relief efforts, the money is helping replenish food inventories and defray housing cost increases. Hearts & Homes expects to serve about 800 Southwest Florida veterans this year.



SWCF President Steve Zentz (far left) presents grant check to Tim Devitt, Tom Donoghue, Wilson Berry, David Santini and SWCF Trustee Mike LaForte

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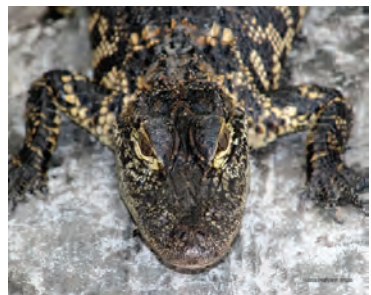
# Wonder Gardens Offers Expanded Guest Experiences For Summer

The Wonder Gardens is offering enhanced guest experiences for the summer. Guests wishing to get up close and personal with some of the attractions can schedule a Wild Wonders Animal Encounter. Habitat Chats planned on Thursdays also offer new and additional experiences.



Wild Wonders Animal Encounters will allow guests to feed sulcata tortoises, rainbow lorikeets and American alligators. The Animal Care and Education staff will lead guests on an adventure that lasts anywhere from 30 minutes to at least an hour. Encounters are offered at the discounted off-season rates of \$20 per person for Wonder Gardens members and \$25 per person for nonmembers, plus park admission. Guests may visit [wondergardens.org](http://wondergardens.org) to view availability and book an encounter for 11:30 a.m. on select days.

In addition, Wonder Gardens has added Habitat Chats at 1 p.m. on Thursday. Habitat Chats are a new and interactive way guests can learn about the animals at the Gardens. Currently, the experience combines an alligator feeding demonstration with information about diet, conservation and fun facts. The chats are offered for all Wonder Gardens visitors without additional cost. Topics and demonstrations are subject to change.



“We are always looking for ways to enhance the customer experience, while continuing our mission to educate,” said Neil Anderson, executive director. “We received feedback from guests that they would like more in-depth encounters, so we combined our lorikeet, tortoise and alligator experiences.”

Guests for the encounters must be age 5 and up. Closed-toed shoes are required. All encounters must have a minimum of two participants and a maximum of six. For parties of less than six, other paid participants may be added to the group.

Larger groups of 10 or more people may schedule a guided tour at 10 a.m. followed by an Animal Meet and Greet experience by emailing [education@wondergardens.org](mailto:education@wondergardens.org) with the group size and date preferences. For information, visit [wondergardens.org/product/wild-wonders/](http://wondergardens.org/product/wild-wonders/) or call (239) 992-2591.

## About Wonder Gardens

The Wonder Gardens, a charitable zoological park and botanical garden in Bonita Springs, is home to rescued birds and reptiles nestled among sprawling banyan trees and plantings. While preserving the best of this site’s 86-year history, the nonprofit cares for rescued, rehabilitated, and non-releasable animals, is upgrading wildlife enclosures and growing the botanical beauty of the property, while delivering education programs and events and further engaging the community to enjoy this jewel in historic Downtown Bonita Springs. The Wonder Gardens at 27180 Old 41 Road, Bonita Springs is one of the few remaining cornerstones of Old Florida, an enduring symbol of the history of the region, as well as a resource for learning about the environment and wildlife. For information, visit [wondergardens.org](http://wondergardens.org) or call (239)-992-2591.



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# The Naples Players

## Into The Woods JR. – June 23 To 25

Book By James Lapine. Music And Lyrics By Stephen Sondheim.

Location: Naples United Church of Christ, 5200 Crayton Road, Naples, FL 34103

Tickets: \$20



Be careful what you wish for, as Stephen Sondheim's and James Lapine's cockeyed fairytale comes to life in this adaptation of their groundbreaking, Tony Award-winning

musical, *Into the Woods JR.* features all of your favorite characters – Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (and his beanstalk) and the Witch – in this lyrically rich retelling of classic Brothers Grimm fables.

## Beauty And The Beast JR. – July 28 To 30

Book By Linda Woolverton. Music By Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, Tim Rice.

Tickets: \$20



Location: Naples United Church of Christ, 5200 Crayton Road, Naples, FL 34103

Based on the original Broadway production that ran for over 13 years and was nominated for nine Tony Awards, and the Academy award-winning motion picture, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast JR.* is a fantastic adaptation of the story of transformation and tolerance. Disney's *Beauty and the Beast JR.* features some of the most popular songs ever written by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman, along with new songs by Menken and Tim Rice.

To purchase tickets for either show call the box office at (239) 263-7990, stop by in person during business hours, or buy online 24/7.

The Naples Players, 701 5th Avenue South, Naples, FL 34102, (239) 263-7990, [www.naplesplayers.org](http://www.naplesplayers.org).



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## Education

Literacy Council Gulf Coast will use its \$50,500 grant to help provide language skills to nearly 1,000 local children and adults. The SWCF funds are earmarked for purchasing the books and materials needed to provide English language classes including ESL, Mom & Tots Family Literacy, Kids+ Lifelong Learning Initiative, U.S. Citizenship, and GED preparation.

New Horizons Of Southwest Florida received \$150,000 to continue its tutoring, mentoring, and education programs for low-income, under-resourced students in Estero and Bonita Springs. The funds were used to help with program support during the Hurricane Ian recovery efforts, and also enabled the organization to purchase a 15-passenger van to transport students.

## Scholarships

The foundation invested more than \$180,000 this year in its two scholarship programs. The first awarded college tuition scholarships for eight employees and dependent family members of the Shadow Wood Community Association and Shadow Wood Country Club. It is administered by the Collier Community Foundation. The second provided assistance for 16 local high school graduates to pursue trade or technical school education. That program is in partnership with the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools.

## Food

Bonita Springs Assistance Program (BSAP) received \$46,000 in grants to provide temporary assistance to local residents affected by an unexpected crisis. The funding also will help launch a new Fresh Bonita program that provides dairy and other food products for inflation-strapped residents. BSAP's food pantry will supply more than 6,000 needy residents this year.

Cafe Of Life is using its \$50,000 grant to fund daily operational needs at the Bonita Springs Leitner Neighborhood Park feeding facility. In addition, the grant will support the food and transportation costs of an outreach program. Cafe of Life also provides sewing machines, cooking classes and gardening supplies. About 500 clients will benefit from the grant.



SWCF President Steve Zentz (far left) presents grant check to Marietta Bala, Jeff Nichols, Delores Siok, Yadi Munoz, Maria Reszel and SWCF Trustee Mike Laforte

Feeding The 5000 received \$23,000 to cover the cost of feeding 3,750 people in Lee and Collier counties. This includes providing nonperishable food that can stretch a family's food supply at Thanksgiving. The group works with 26 schools and agencies (including other SWCF charities) to identify the clients who are most in need of support.

Interfaith Charities received \$115,400 in grants to bolster its food pantry with healthier options like fruit, vegetables, and eggs for 954 households including 871 children, 1,406 adults, and 195 seniors. Interfaith also offers free income tax preparation, computer assistance, and housing/utility cost relief.

## Health And Human Services

Alliance For Period Supplies is using its \$23,000 grant to purchase period products for at-risk women and girls in Lee and Collier counties. The alliance supplies 37 nonprofit partners that distribute period products to more than 4,000 local females each month.

Florida Lions Eye Clinic received a \$37,000 grant to purchase and implement an electronic medical records system. The investment will cover software, new tablets and staff training. The free clinic treated 2,000 patients in fiscal year 2022.

Friends Of The Salvation Army was awarded \$75,000 to fund direct assistance for some 1,200 needy clients. Services include help with rent or utility bills, car repairs, prescriptions, beds, child car seats, baby strollers, and small kitchen appliances. Additional funding will be used to purchase a passenger vehicle to support its programs.

Guardian Ad Litem received more than \$137,100 in grants to fund basic needs for children who are under court supervision. Many of these youth have been removed from their homes due to neglect, abuse or abandonment and have a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem volunteer to advocate for them. As many as 900 youth will benefit with funding for education, housing, clothing and school and recreational needs.

Valerie's House will use its \$90,000 to help children through the loss of a parent, sibling or other loved one and to provide assistance to families recovering from job losses and major housing damages from Hurricane Ian. About 100 children will benefit from funding that will enable the organization to hire a licensed grief counselor. The organization also provides support for caregivers.

Since its founding in 2012, SWCF has awarded \$6.5 million in grants and provided more than \$750,000 in scholarships to 70 local students.

As the foundation prepares for fiscal 2024, Zentz said that "the compassion and generosity of the Shadow Wood community is exceeded only by the needs of charities dealing with inflation, rebuilding costs, affordable housing shortages and a significantly greater demand for their services."

All articles for *The Brooks* are due by the 20th of the month.

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**BROADWAYPALM PRESENTS**

**May 26 – July 1**

**Footloose**

A lively city boy moves from Chicago to a small farming town where rock 'n' roll and dancing have been banned. After the culture shock sets in, he tries to shake things up and overturn the extreme ban. In the process he catches the attention of the lovely preacher's daughter. The Oscar and Tony-nominated Top 40 score includes *Holding Out For A Hero*, *Let's Hear It For The Boy*, *Almost Paradise* and the title song, *Footloose*.

**July 7 - August 12**

**The Little Mermaid**

This Disney classic comes to life on the Broadway Palm stage! Take a dive into a magical kingdom where the beautiful mermaid, Ariel, longs to leave her ocean home to live in the world above. When Ariel falls in love with the human Prince Eric, she makes a bargain with the evil sea witch, but the bargain isn't what it seems. You'll see all your favorite characters and hear the irresistible songs including *Under The Sea*, *Kiss The Girl*, *Part Of Your World* and more!

Dates may be subject to change.

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