

PHILANTHROPY MATTERS

“Links” Galore on Charity Tour



by Yurianna Mikolay
Executive Director
Ocean Reef Community Foundation

You may recognize “The Link” as the name of the Foundation’s annual newsletter. Our latest edition just went to print in the same week we discovered “links” galore between the Ocean Reef and Homestead communities on our recent Charity Tour, proving the aptness of the name once again.

At our first stop, Carysfort Transportation driver Ingelman Duisty lit up when we pulled in to visit the Homestead Youth Arts Center where his little girl takes dance lessons. He tells us it’s a hub in the community where parents know kids are safe and cared for “like a family.”

Inside, we’re impressed by a wall of trophies, a talented class of ballerinas and two dedicated sisters who have served hundreds of kids leading the studio for more than a decade. It turns out Ashley and Lianna are the daughters of the owner of Archer Painting here at Ocean Reef.

As we discuss their programs, **Carolyn Ellis** realizes she’d actually already enjoyed one of their

performances when a Wynn’s at Ocean Reef employee invited her to attend her child’s recital recently.

Next up is a Redlands Christian Migrant Association childcare center, where we take our time meandering through gaggles of engaging preschoolers to see a playground in need of a sunshade. The children’s parents are farm workers responsible for harvesting the crops that nourish our own families every day.

At the Homestead Animal Hospital, once the practice of ORCAT’s first vet Dr. Dale Vicha, Project PetSnip works to help control the area’s shocking numbers of unwanted cats and dogs. **Judy Wilson** corroborates that she’s recently frequented two Redlands plant nurseries whose owners each brought up their growing concerns about the huge problem of pets being abandoned in the area.

Last stop is The Arc of South Florida’s new ACE Academy building, one of three sites in Homestead and Florida City where the Greater Miami Youth Symphony hopes to extend their music lessons. We learn about the symphony from VP Leslie Carpenter, proud grandmother of one of its musicians and a 30 year employee of Keen Battle Mead & Company at Ocean Reef.

Last and not least, we are delighted to come across the Club’s own VP of F&B Giovanni Melis’ daughter Francesca conducting a speech therapy session on our tour of the new school before the half



Jay Holmes, Candy Sutfin, Cynthia Lee, Nanette Elenbaas, Carolyn Ellis, Grants Committee Chair Janie Sims, Judy Wilson, Shirley Shumway, Maria Barros and Myrna Charlton of The Arc of South Florida, Yuri Mikolay and Linda Owens.



The group surveys the RCMA playground in need of a sunshade.

hour trip back to the Reef.

While Ocean Reef’s physical separation from surrounding communities can be a barrier to making the kinds of day to day connections that so often lead donors to give, the Foundation’s work in these areas shows time and again that we

have more links to these areas than we may realize. So, keep an eye out for “The Link” in the mailbox or peruse it anytime at www.orfound.org. It’s chock full of charities and very likely to include some links to familiar faces and causes that matter to you.