



Keys Charity Tour Not Business as Usual

by Yurianna Mikolay,
Executive Director of Ocean Reef
Community Foundation

The Foundation Grants Committee set off on its first Upper Keys Charity Tour since Hurricane Irma this week and found not much is business as usual for the non-profit organizations we visited. The storm wreaked havoc on their facilities, employees and the now increasing numbers of families they are stepping up to serve. The needs in the Keys are greater than ever before.

The first stop was a sobering one at a provider of counseling services in Tavernier. There we heard that loss of jobs and income and the stresses of the recovery are causing and worsening mental health and health issues. The center is seeing a marked increase in aggression, self-medication, depression and anxiety, as well as in the number of people who are unable to pay for the counseling and medications needed to help.

Just across the highway is Ocean Studies, a small public-charter elementary school which had extensive storm damage and was forced to hold classes in the dance studio next door for several weeks during mold remediation. Quite a few of the 110 students have parents who work in the Ocean Reef community. The school has applied for about \$30,000 for clean-up, repair and replacement of equipment on the now

A Weekend of Pickleball



Rachel and Dan Cohen square off at Sunday's Pickleball Clinic.



Heather Post receives instruction from pro Lucy Kovalova. A complimentary clinic was part of the weekend's agenda.



Barry Goldsmith and pro Simone Jardim defeat Ron Roscia and Catherine Parenteau in the semifinal of the Inaugural Pro-Am.

by Jim Morton,
Director of Tennis

So you want to know what it's like to play pickleball with one of the best players in the country? Well eight Ocean Reef Members got a chance to see when they played side by side with the top professionals in the sport this past weekend at the Tennis & Games Center in our inaugural Pickleball Pro-Am Tournament.

Ocean Reef Touring Pro Simone Jardim, the top ranked women pickleball player in the

US, invited seven of her top competitors to join her at The Reef and matched them up with some of our best playing Members in a day-long competition. The tournament began with the eight teams being divided into two flights of four. Each team played the other teams in their flight to establish the seedings in the elimination round. In the top half of the Quarterfinals Red Flight winner **Greg Costas** and Matt Wright defeated **Chuck Hartz** and Corrine Carr, while Blue Flight runner-up **John Costas** and Lucy Kovalova



Ron Elenbaas paired with pro Kyle Yates in Saturday's Pro-Am.

dismissed **Buck Schottland** and Ben Johns, the third place finishers in the Red Flight. In the bottom half, Blue Flight winner **Ron Elenbaas** and Kyle Yates were upset by the Red Flights fourth place finisher **Ron Roscia** and Catherine Parenteau while the Red Flights

PHILANTHROPY MATTERS

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by Yurianna Mikolay
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barren playground from our Florida Keys Hurricane Recovery Fund (FKHRF).

Next stop Key Largo School, the primary Upper Keys public elementary and middle school. It has been an incredibly challenging school year for the employees and 850+ children who attend. The Foundation has already made several donations to help families with hurricane recovery here. These were done quickly through our Community Relief Fund which benefits communities where employees live, and a more recent FKHRF grant to Keys Children's Foundation continues to support needy KLS families.

Although KLS has applications in for 2018, our visit was actually to learn about two organizations making requests for the first time this year. One is an innovative program which provides primary medical care right in the schools. About 70 percent of children in the area are either uninsured or on Medicaid with very limited options for Medicaid providers, so many only get medical



ORCF Grants Committee members visited Ocean Studies elementary school, among other non-profit organizations, on an Upper Keys Charity Tour Monday. Photo by Linda Owens.

attention at an Emergency Room. With more families in financial difficulty after the storm, the effort is even more needed. The principal attests that the program provides immediate attention for faster healing and minimizes missed school for kids (and teachers) and time out of work for parents, who can little afford it.

Finally we heard from a new organization with a familiar face. It's Melissa O'Keeffe who is the commissioner of a new basketball league for kids ages six to 14. Many on the tour know Melissa and her husband Mic, Executive Director of Sports & Recreation at The Reef. Because of storm damage many sports programs have been canceled for lack of practice or game fields. The new

basketball league filled the void and is actively engaging about 200 kids, many the children of both employees and Members.

We will go back to the Upper Keys for a Charity Tour on Friday, February 23, and a second tour of Homestead and Florida City charities is scheduled for Friday, February 2. You are encouraged to come see the impact of past grants for yourself and provide vital feedback on new proposals. Tours depart promptly at 8:30 a.m. (to-go coffee, tea and water available from 8 a.m.) and return by 12:30 p.m. Seating is limited and reservations (required) can be made by emailing foundation@oceanreef.com or calling 305-367-4707.

Flying Club to Tour Homestead Air Base

The next event for the Ocean Reef Flying Club is a tour of the Homestead Air Base on Friday, January 26, 2018. Transportation will depart from the Cultural Center at 8 a.m. sharp. The Tour lasts approximately three and a half hours, with lunch following at the Base Cafeteria (Cash). The Tour is available to Flying Club Members and the cost is \$20 per person for the transportation.

The Flying Club is open to non-pilots as well as those with an interest in flying. The cost of an annual family membership is just \$95. Please contact **Nancy Eaves** for reservations or membership information at 305-367-3600.

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