

Florida Keys Hurricane Response Fund Update



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Last week we provided a complete report of how the Foundation's Community Relief Fund assisted employees of the Ocean Reef Community and nonprofits in Homestead and the Upper Keys where they live in response to Hurricane Irma. This week we'll bring you up to date on our continuing Florida Keys Hurricane Response Fund efforts.

You may recall that this fund



The Foundation's hurricane relief efforts continued at Monday's board meeting when a grant for \$85,000 was presented to the Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition (FKHSC). The grant was made with \$25,000 for the Upper Keys from our Community Relief Fund (for nearby areas where employees live) and \$60,000 for the Middle and Lower Keys from our Florida Keys Hurricane Response Fund (FKHRF, for all of Monroe County). Pictured (left to right): FKHRF Committee Member David Ritz, ORCF Chairman Bill Nutt, FKHSC CEO Arianna Nesbitt and Chair Erin Muir, and FKHRF Committee Members Alan Goldstein and Mike Berman.

was created with an anonymous \$500,000 matching gift to assist the hard hit areas of Monroe County outside Ocean Reef's gates. The challenge was quickly matched thanks to the generosity of five Member families stepping

up to donate \$100,000 each for this important cause and a total of \$1.3 has now been raised.

In its short time in existence, the FKHRF Committee -- chaired by **Bob Schmetterer** and advised by experts from throughout the county -- has already disbursed \$865,000. A dozen grants have been made to do everything from coordinating distribution of basics like food and mattresses; to helping childcare programs, shelters and other key nonprofits make repairs to reopen and supporting schools and clinics; to assisting needy individuals and families directly through gifts to Coldwell Banker Schmitt Charitable Foundation. You've seen many of these grants documented here in the *Ocean Reef Press* and can still learn more about them on our Facebook page. Two more grants we've not yet shared were approved last week.

One grant went to Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition which serves pregnant women and families, with a focus on the safety, health and development of children. Nine months after Hurricane Wilma the birth rate went up more than 25 percent and FKHSC anticipates the more severe Irma having an even a greater impact. Lots of kids are now living in dangerous, "un-baby-proofed" settings and often sleeping in unsafe conditions. Expectant and new moms are facing increased stress and financial challenges.

Healthy Start is providing support for expectant and new moms and little ones of all ages county-wide, from diapers and formula to replacing beds and car seats. As a provider of prenatal care, they are expecting more unplanned pregnancies and complications and to have to cover medical care that many families won't be able to afford because of hurricane related financial strains. There is a huge increased need for intensive case management for the most vulnerable families including help relocating and paying for childcare and links to other services.

The second grant will help address the devastation of Fisherman's Hospital in Marathon, the only hospital between Key West and Key Largo, which has not been able to reopen to offer even the most basic of emergency services. It will have to be rebuilt at a cost of \$20+ million. Our grant is supporting the field hospital providing the community with emergency, lab, x-ray, pharmacy and six inpatient beds while a more sound temporary structure is being built.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Florida Keys Hurricane Response Fund, please mail your check made payable to the Ocean Reef Community Foundation with Florida Keys Hurricane response in the memo line to: 35 Ocean Reef Drive, Suite 148, Key Largo, FL 33037.