

Philanthropy Corner – 11/15/09

Article 45 - “Local Opportunities to Volunteer Now Listed on the Web”

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This week marks the annual celebration of philanthropy with National Philanthropy Day and Community Foundation Week, an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all in our community who support the various nonprofit organizations. To all members of our community who give of their time, talent and resources to keep our community strong and vibrant, a huge Thank You! Your participation and involvement in our community’s nonprofits as a volunteer is critically important as our charitable organizations face unprecedented challenges.

Nonprofits are relying more than ever on volunteers to fill key roles to help accomplish their missions, especially during these difficult economic times and declining revenues. Despite the economy, volunteerism is on the rise with an additional one million people volunteering last year. More than one quarter of the adult population, or 61.8 million Americans, contributed 8 billion hours of volunteer service in 2008. Almost half of new volunteers last year were between the ages of 16 and 24. The estimated value of this volunteer service was worth \$162 billion according to the Independent Sector.

Although Florida ranks 49<sup>th</sup> for volunteerism, the Keys are blessed with a population of talented and caring people who seek out ways to help. Recently, I was pleasantly surprised when I received a telephone call from a returning seasonal resident and volunteer who wanted to get involved before they even unpacked and settled in. Having been away all summer, they wanted to quickly re-engage. So I directed them to “Keys Volunteers,” a new on-line website created in collaboration with Monroe County nonprofit organizations to match individuals with volunteer needs in our community.

Whether looking to serve as a board member, or provide professional services such as legal, marketing or accounting or other specialized services, or simply providing administrative assistance such as answering the phone or helping with a fundraiser, Keys Volunteers has an opportunity for you. Research shows that the right “match” is key to inspiring people to want to get involved and people are more likely to volunteer if they are able to use a skill they already possess.

In order to make it easy to find a volunteer opportunity that fits your interests, skills and schedule, the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys (CFFK) is providing public access to volunteer opportunities, at no cost to local nonprofits, through our website at [www.cffk.org](http://www.cffk.org). The Keys Volunteers page contains easy instructions on how to search for a volunteer activity or nonprofit organization. There are currently 42

volunteer jobs posted on Keys Volunteers representing 16 organizations throughout Monroe County and new postings occurring regularly.

It's appropriate that Keys Volunteers is launched during Community Foundation Week. In communities across America, more than 700 community foundations have been on the front line helping those most in need during this economic crisis. Community foundations are stewards of philanthropic resources from institutional and individual donors to support community-based organizations. The beauty of all community foundations is that virtually no one is excluded from participating and you need not be wealthy to have the satisfaction of knowing you are making a positive difference in the lives of people.

Keys Volunteers is the result of a strategic partnership with local nonprofit organizations and the Community Foundation. It's an example of the work that your local community foundation is engaging in as we identify and address problems that afflict our community by supporting activities of nonprofit organizations that improve the lives of community residents.

For nearly a decade, CFFK has been recognizing volunteerism through its annual hosting of the Unsung Hero Luncheon. Two years ago, CFFK initiated the Leadership Success Academy that offers training for nonprofit board members. All these programs reside under the Center For NonProfit Excellence (CNPE) at the foundation and are offered at no cost to participating organizations, thanks in part to grants from the Marion Stevens Fund and other endowments under management at CFFK. In addition to the CNPE, the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys assists individual donors with creating charitable plans to engage in strategic philanthropy. Since its inception in 1996, more than \$12 million has been granted through its donor funds for local charitable projects, including \$1.3 million from the My Key West Emergency Relief Fund during Hurricane Wilma.

Like its nonprofit partners, CFFK is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit whose purpose is to make Key West and the Florida Keys a better place to live now and in the future by encouraging philanthropy and matching these acts of caring to the community needs. We are privileged to provide Keys Volunteers as a community service and thank each one of the many volunteers in our community for your unselfish acts of caring and generosity of your time. Please log on to [www.cffk.org](http://www.cffk.org) to volunteer or for information about our programs.