

# Community Foundation Honors Unsung Heroes

## Renewing the Heart and Soul of Our Community

The Community Foundation of the Florida Keys (CFFK) is celebrating its incredible nonprofit partners that are working so hard to bring back the heart and soul of our Keys community following Hurricane Irma.

Hundreds of nonprofits and thousands of tireless volunteers rallied in the wake of the storm to provide immediate relief and recovery to get our residents' lives back in order and help our community recover and heal. CFFK worked closely with its nonprofit partners who committed endless resources and toiled nonstop to help those most in need up and down the Keys.

The nonprofits are often our community's true Unsung Heroes. For 18 years, CFFK has been hosting the Unsung Heroes event

to honor individual volunteers who give of their time, talents and hard work every day to make the Florida Keys better now and for the future. This year, CFFK is honored to recognize the nonprofits themselves for their passion and diligent efforts that change lives. These pages provide a snapshot of how they are helping the Keys remain resilient following a catastrophic event. Many of their efforts were enhanced by generous donations to the Community Foundation's disaster relief initiative (see page 7A).

The Unsung Heroes event sponsor, the Lower Keys Medical Center, is joining with CFFK in celebrating the profound strength of our nonprofit community. Says David Clay, CEO of the Lower Keys Medical Center, "I am pleased that we could sponsor the Unsung Heroes

Awards again this year, particularly because we have worked so closely together with the recipient organizations in caring for our community and for our hospital family."

Says Ron Burd, CFFK Chair, "We're grateful for the incredible generosity of so many people in the Keys and around the country who have joined us in this effort."

The Community Foundation will recognize its nonprofit partners on Friday, January 26th, at a special luncheon at the Key West Marriott Beachside.

Congratulations to all our community's nonprofits who share the Community Foundation's belief in the future of the Florida Keys and who are making this place we call Paradise so special.



### Star Of The Sea Foundation

With the Lower Keys food pantry rendered uninhabitable by the storm, SOS moved its entire operation and reopened in a temporary location, serving over 7,000 individuals and families in four weeks, including more new registrants than in the entire four years prior to the storm. Special thanks to Robert Wood and Raquel Rojas for spearheading the relocation.



### Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Early Learning Coalition worked to get childcare centers operating quickly by assessing damage, replacing furniture and materials, providing infant supplies and socio-emotional support for children and caregivers, working with DCF/school districts to find temporary sites, and seeking grants from national organizations to reimburse providers.



### FIRM Keys

Fair Insurance Rates Monroe County (FIRM) is a resource for residents of Monroe County with property insurance issues. Their volunteers and staff immediately began assisting with FEMA and insurance claims. Within weeks of the storm, FIRM, with the support of Monroe County, held five Insurance Forums throughout the Keys and plans more outreach and recovery events.



### AIDS Help

In reconfiguring the annual Royal Campaign post-Irma, AIDS Help and the King and Queen Candidates strongly felt that resumption should benefit ALL, not just AIDS Help's mission and clients. The \$129,000 amassed was distributed for rental and utility assistance; mental health counseling; relocation; emergency healthcare; and resource identification for any Keys resident seeking restoration and rehabilitation.



Following the wrath of Hurricane Irma, the Community Foundation raised and distributed **more than \$1 million** for relief and recovery.



### Florida Keys Outreach Coalition

In the aftermath of Irma, FKOC immediately provided homelessness prevention assistance throughout Monroe County, including increasing its staffing of the Quick Assist program to provide immediate rental, utility, food, and basic needs assistance. They met with over 150 households in the first six weeks, while providing housing for 163 residential clients and operating its Two Loaves & Fish Food Pantry.



### Sister Season Fund

Sister Season Fund is providing hope to over 300 people in Key West with rent and utilities assistance while they are rebuilding their homes and lives. Royal Furniture provided a space for the Fund to accept the enormous amount of applicants they worked diligently to process.



### Literacy Volunteers Of America

Literacy Volunteers is helping our community recover one person at a time. They helped folks who suffered losses complete their FEMA applications. Several volunteers opened up their homes to those who found themselves homeless after the storm. Others took food to those in need and helped with cleanup in Big Pine and Marathon.



### Big Pine Academy

Big Pine Academy was devastated by Irma. Through the help of volunteers led by David Reeves, the Academy reopened 18 days after the hurricane hit. The cafeteria was converted into a center for PK - Kindergarten and Grades 1 - 5 moved into existing classrooms upstairs. The neighborhood school survived!



### Impromptu Classical Concerts

William Shakespeare wrote in Measure for Measure, "Music oft hath such a charm to make bad good." Impromptu is offering a season of musical performances to do just that. They will be celebrating the centennial of Leonard Bernstein who came to Key West to be rejuvenated and "make bad good."



### Florida Keys Children's Shelter

The Children's Shelter has been providing shelter, food, hygiene items, and counseling to children, teens, and families throughout the Florida Keys. The staff has put significant effort into delivering surplus in-kind donations received to other organizations, ensuring every gift is going directly and immediately to Keys residents in need after Hurricane Irma.



### Peace Covenant Presbyterian Church

Our member, Linda Cunningham, with the assistance of John Teets, established a Facebook page providing updates, helping residents and evacuees find help and resources. The Church provided financial resources, including rent and mortgage assistance, and supplies to many, including 15 Monroe County teachers who lost their homes. The Church's parking lot was used for Red Cross distribution.



### Good Health Clinic

Good Health Clinic provides free health care to low-income, uninsured residents. The clinic instituted temporary policies to help alleviate some of the impacts including providing medical care and non-controlled, free medications to any individual in need due to the storm. They have also been working diligently with other nonprofits supporting hurricane victims' needs.



### Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition

The Healthy Start Coalition has been providing everything from diapers, wipes and formula to essential baby safety equipment, mental health services, life-saving medicine and housing assistance. Their ability to serve is due to community partnerships and generous donors. They will continue their mission to be there for new families as they heal and grow.



### Florida Keys SPCA

FKSPCA established free routine wellness and medical care clinics to keep animals belonging to community members affected by Irma in their homes as opposed to surrendering them due to financial constraints. Through its FAITH program, FKSPCA is also sheltering animals belonging to these individuals for free until they can find a place to live.



The Community Foundation has provided **\$23 million in grants** to the community since 1996.



Star of the Sea Foundation

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# 2018 UNSUNG HEROES/COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE FL KEYS



## Guidance / Care Center

Over 40 staff members have provided crisis counseling at the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in Key West, Big Pine, Marathon, and Islamorada for 12-hour shifts, 7 days a week, totaling 1,600 hours of service per month. Post-hurricane support groups are offered throughout the Keys and counselors have provided support at every school. To date, they've reached more than 1,200 people.



## Monroe County Education Foundation

Serving as a conduit to distribute Irma relief funds to students and school personnel most impacted by the storm, MCEF established a Relief Fund and partnered with the Monroe County School District in the disbursement of needed relief funds directly to the schools with a goal to preserve our workforce, teachers, and students.



Southernmost Coconut Castaways

Voices



for Florida Keys Children

## Voices for Florida Keys Children

After Hurricane Irma, Voices strove to meet the devastating needs of its foster families and guardians of abused or neglected children by distributing over \$6,000 in gift cards, supplies and food, and arranging an 18-wheeler of supplies to the hardest hit communities. The organization continues to fund children's needs.



## History of Diving Museum

With the help of staff and volunteers, the Museum opened two weeks after the storm. They focused on helping employees recover economically and being open to the community and visitors. The first visitors came from Big Pine, excited for a few hours of escape from debris while being rejuvenated in the air conditioning. Other locals and first responders followed.



## Southernmost Homeless Assistance League

Recovering quickly from Hurricane Irma, St. Mary's Soup Kitchen continues to support the hungry in our community for over 30 years. Director Mary Leen, a volunteer who tirelessly organizes, coordinates and cooks meals for poor and homeless individuals is a fundamental asset to SHAL feeding its sheltered hungry, homeless individuals.



## Legal Services Of Greater Miami

Legal Services has assisted 200 Monroe County hurricane survivors with legal problems caused by the storm, including loss of food, housing and employment. With the Monroe County and Cuban American Bar Associations, Catholic Charities and local officials, Legal Services continues to meet with clients throughout the Keys.



## The Basilica School of St. Mary Star of the Sea

Nine days after Irma, the School opened for free childcare for the community, a much needed service for working parents. The school muscled its own cleanup and was the first school to re-open, helping families return to "normal." As generosity pours in, goods, services, and monies are still being given to those in need.



## Special Olympics Florida Monroe County

Special Olympics Florida resumed sports practices immediately after returning from evacuation. They went forward with their annual SUP Invitational (Oct. 13-15) to provide competition for local and traveling athletes. Families who had suffered losses were provided support through fundraising efforts at the event, along with follow-up for needs during the holidays.



## Waterfront Playhouse

Waterfront Playhouse is thrilled to present its 78th consecutive season in Key West. To help the post-Irma Keys community, they are offering free tickets to patrons in the hard hit area of Marathon, increasing the number of free tickets given to students throughout the Keys, and continuing low-priced previews for all locals.



## Cancer Foundation of the Florida Keys

This Key West-based local charity has been providing support to patients and their families from Key Largo to Key West with financial assistance, emotional support, and educational materials. The Foundation offers assistance to qualified cancer patients in the Keys and aids them in the education and treatment for their disease.



## Florida Keys Council of the Arts

The Arts Council funded local full-time artists, performers and writers in need following Irma. Assistance was given to applicants from all areas of the Keys for art supplies, tools and materials. Our arts community was eager to get back to work!



## Key Bridge

Key Bridge provided free primary medical care and counseling support in the month after the storm and continues to provide treatment as needed.



## Key West Rotary Club Foundation

Rotary set up a distribution center in Key West and Big Pine immediately following Hurricane Irma to distribute much needed supplies. They provided goods to the hardest hit areas, helped clear out homes and debris in Big Pine, and filled 100 grocery bags with canned goods and a Publix gift certificate to help families.



## Coldwell Banker Schmitt Charitable Foundation

The Foundation's small Board of Volunteers went from reviewing an average of 9 applications per month to 35 to 40 applications per week post-Irma to assist residents in need. They helped pay rent and mortgage payments, provide temporary housing, and replaced appliances and vehicles, with the goal of keeping Keys residents in their homes and working.



## Southernmost Coconut Castaways

The Castaways compiled a 2-CD set called "Keys Strong." Musicians donated all songs and sponsors offset production costs. To date, \$12,500 has been donated to the United Way of the Florida Keys Hurricane Irma Relief Fund, with another check in that amount or more coming soon. 100% of funds raised is going to the Relief Fund.



## Key West Community Sailing Center

Many of the live aboard residents of the Florida Keys lost their homes. There was a large group living on boats at the mooring field and on the hook, and the storm destroyed them. In collaboration with the City of Key West, we have created a way to help these now homeless residents make their way back on the water.



## United Way of the Florida Keys

Thanks to generous support, United Way has been working hard to serve friends and neighbors impacted by the hurricane's destruction, earmarking over \$1 million towards helping our community recover. They distributed supplies and gift cards, provided over \$600,000 to 31 local nonprofits, and began an emergency case management program.



## Key West Garden Club

The iconic Strangler Fig was toppled by Hurricane Irma, bringing down the brick tunnel and other walls in its wake, devastating much of the gardens at West Martello. Dozens of Garden Club volunteers worked 24/7 in the 8 weeks after the storm to restore and replant the gardens to create a new natural place of beauty and serenity for all in the community.



## Southernmost Post No. 3911 VFW of the U.S.

Although the Post was rendered uninhabitable by Hurricane Irma, members made the parking lot available as a staging area for relief supplies and responders, and assisted where needed, donating time and sweat to help someone in need. The members of Post 3911 are grateful and proud of how our community came together to manage the many challenges.



## American Red Cross

Volunteers worked tirelessly to help residents recover from Irma. Evacuation centers opened, overnight shelters were later opened, meals and snacks were distributed, and relief items, cleanup and other supplies were provided. Nurses assisted with minor injuries and trained caseworkers provided direct assistance. In October alone, 6,925 Red Cross recovery cases were opened across the Florida Keys.



## St. Mary's Soup Kitchen

St. Mary's Soup Kitchen sustained a food loss of over \$8,000 and had no way to recover. It raised over \$3,000 and volunteers added to the pantry. The Kitchen prepares healthy meals every day for between 100 and 130 of the homeless and hungry, seven days a week, 365 days a year.



## Tropic Cinema

Tropic Cinema believes that film has the power to unite, to strengthen and to inspire. Following Hurricane Irma, Tropic wanted to bring Keys residents back together in an encouraging space. They reopened quickly and reduced prices of tickets and concessions to help brighten the outlook of our community.



## Samuel's House

Samuel's House clients wanted to come home to their safe place! Thanks to the efforts of Founder and CEO Elmira Leto, the shelter reopened with generators and was open to anyone needing a hot shower or to do laundry. Samuel's House also served 1,800 meals daily from Key West to Marathon.



# 2018 UNSUNG HEROES/COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE FL KEYS



## Leadership Monroe County

LMC is dedicated to quality of life improvement through educating community leaders on the challenges faced by residents with intensive and immersive class sessions. Pre- & Post-Irma, Class 25 and 26 selected team projects to facilitate and foster storm preparedness and awareness to ensure the environment is restored, kept protected and storm-strengthened through stewardship and commitment to sustainability.



## Zonta Club of Marathon

Zonta members worked tirelessly by assisting with the recovery of neighbors, housing those now homeless, doing laundry for those unable to do their own, feeding those who were hungry, and funding those in need through the Service Committee. Each member of Zonta Marathon did something in some way to help those in need.



## DOLPHINS to Stop Domestic Violence

Board members and the Executive Director developed the Fountain of Blessings program to accompany their other programs. They opened a storehouse to make recovery donations not only available but also accessible to the Upper Keys community. Joining forces with KeysStrong in this endeavor has been quite successful for the Upper Keys.



## American Legion Riders Post 154, Marathon

The Marathon Post did a number of cleanup and household clean-out efforts, toy drives, and a free Thanksgiving dinner. They also present the American Legion Riders Coral Head MusicFest in Marathon, in which a large portion of the money raised will go to building supplies for Keys residents.



## Boys & Girls Clubs of the Keys Area

Staff and board members went to Big Pine to work with the Miami Clubs in handing out a truckload of donations and cleaning up yards for those who needed help. They have also suspended parent fees at the clubs through March 31 in order to help families get back on their feet.



## Kids Come First in the Keys

Three days post-Irma, Coordinator Roxanne Posada delivered clothing, shoes and hygiene items from the inventory to children and families hit by the storm. She volunteered with Rotary and KeysStrong delivering food and water, and whatever else was asked of her time and energy to get the schools re-opened so children could return home.



## Friends of the Monroe County Library in Key West

The Friends dedicated the proceeds of its December Book Sale – nearly \$1,700 -- to support outreach to help the other Monroe County Libraries in the Middle and Upper Keys recover from Hurricane Irma.

## Keys AHEC Health Centers

### Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

AHEC provides No Cost primary care services to medically vulnerable children in Monroe County. AHEC has expanded its program from four medical center sites to eight, now including a dental sealant program for second and seventh graders. By providing over 7,500 visits last year, children have accessible health care available to them every day.



## Keys to Be the Change

The organization secured a \$10,000 donation for 86 youth in Marathon who were left homeless due to Hurricane Irma. Gift cards as well as essential items were distributed before Christmas to help make the holidays brighter. The plan is to continue giving to these youth throughout the school year based on their individual needs.



## Key West Art and Historical Society

The Society ensured that the historic properties and collection under its care survived the impact of Hurricane Irma. This included preparations leading up to the storm and recovery efforts once the storm passed. The work of the Society's dedicated staff ensured that the properties and collection sustained minimal damages.



## The Studios of Key West

The Studios sheltered 20 people during the storm and became a national media communications hub in the days following. The organization provided housing for displaced artists and schoolteachers for nearly two months in the residency cottages, worked diligently to connect artists with local and national grant resources, and hosted a concert that raised \$20,000 for relief efforts.



## KeysStrong.org

Post-Irma, KeysStrong.org came together under the nonprofit umbrella of Samuel's House for the purpose of supporting disaster relief efforts. KeysStrong.org is a unified organization, speaking with one voice, helping to rebuild a stronger Florida Keys. The organization served thousands of needs. Volunteers include Sandy Higgs, Patxi Pastor, Laurie Thibaud, Tanya Leto and Joe Walsh, warehouse donor on Rockland Key.

# BELIEVING IN THE FUTURE OF THE KEYS

The Community Foundation of the Florida Keys (CFFK) serves the needs of our community and the philanthropic aims of donors who wish to better the Keys. For more than 20 years, the Community Foundation has been making the Florida Keys a better place to live today and for the future by encouraging philanthropy and matching these acts of caring to our community's needs.

CFFK addresses critical community issues when challenges arise. Immediately following the devastation of Hurricane Irma in the Keys last September, the Community Foundation went into action to raise and distribute more than \$1 million for relief and recovery efforts greatly benefiting thousands of residents from Key West to Key Largo.

Thousands of individuals, businesses and foundations across the country and as far away as New Zealand contributed to CFFK's Hurricane Irma disaster relief initiative. Through their generous donations, CFFK provided critical funding through more than 75 nonprofit partners up and down the Keys to deliver vital aid directly to the dire residents who needed it most -- children and families, people who lost their homes, teachers, police officers, workers in the depleted tourism industry, fishermen, artists, special needs populations and so many others.

The funding was made possible by generous donations

to the Florida Keys Emergency Relief Fund and the Landau Family Hurricane Relief Fund for the Upper Keys. Learn more about Keys recovery at [cffk.org](http://cffk.org) or make a donation to help with long-term rebuilding efforts. 100% of all contributions are going directly to community needs and are tax deductible.

Since 1996, CFFK and its partners have granted more than \$23 million to the Keys community, supporting residents through grants to local nonprofit partners, student scholarships, teacher awards, and workshops and program services.

Local businesses also partner with CFFK to boost our community. The Lower Keys Medical Center sponsors the Unsung Heroes event to recognize local nonprofits. Key West Marriott Beachside sponsors the Leadership Success Academy, which teaches leadership and governance skills to nonprofit leaders. Many local businesses were also key contributors to the Relief Fund to aid with Hurricane Irma recovery.

The Community Foundation is here to help. The "Did You Know" facts on these pages highlight the work it does in the community. CFFK invites you to be a partner and join their efforts at [cffk.org](http://cffk.org) or call 305-292-1502.



## Unity of the Keys

Youth Ministry children collected and distributed backpacks of essentials for children in the Lower Keys and delivered them to Sugarloaf School. Unity collected microwave ovens and hot plates and donated them to families who were living in hotels with no way to cook nutritious meals.



## Womankind

Womankind sped through cleanup of a 3-foot storm surge to open two days after the evacuation was lifted. The Hurricane Irma Recovery Fund provides free visits, lab tests, procedures, long-acting birth control, and more. It continues in 2018 to help those still recovering. Womankind distributed clothing and supplies to help women who lost everything.



## Florida Keys Education Foundation

The FKCC Foundation created a fund to receive and distribute support directly to affected students, faculty, and staff for needs including housing, transportation, textbooks, laptops, school supplies, and jobs. For the Keys to repair and rebuild, the effort to keep these young lives committed to living here is critical.



Wesley House Family Services

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# 2018 UNSUNG HEROES/COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE FL KEYS



Key West Garden Club



### Metropolitan Community Church of Key West

The Church provided assistance with buying food and household supplies and helped persons out of work with medical and dental bills. Members also provided several hundred hours of labor to community organizations to help distribute goods received from out-of-county organizations.



### Habitat for Humanity of Key West and Lower FL Keys

Habitat distributed tools and supplies immediately following the hurricane to residents in need. They are currently repairing hurricane-damaged homes for homeowners in the Lower Keys.



### Red Barn Theatre

Celebrating 38 years of professional theatre, Red Barn is proud to serve the Florida Keys. Nothing can keep its talented artists from entertaining audiences with escape from the troubles of the real world. Red Barn is grateful for the support of special people like Blake Hunter, who give encouragement to forge ahead.



### Fringe Theater Key West

Fringe began the post-Irma theater season with one thought: to be "in-service" to the community. Fringe coordinated a toy drive and free reading of the radio play "It's a Wonderful Life" at four different venues, including Marathon Community Theater. More than 300 people attended and brought over 100 gifts to be distributed by the Holiday Helpers.



### St. Columba Episcopal Church

The Marathon Church has been a conduit of hope in many ways, including serving as a shelter for families in the Middle Keys, helping with tree and debris removal, serving as a distribution center for supplies, goods and furniture, providing housing for volunteers, and through donations, providing RV trailers to help maintain our workforce and community.



### Baptist Health South Florida

Despite suffering water damage, Mariners Hospital provided emergency services within two days of the storm and was fully open within five days. The opening was a collaborative effort. While Fishermen's Community Hospital remains closed due to damage sustained during Irma, a field hospital is open on the campus to provide community care.



### Navy League Key West Council

Members of the Navy League, led by Vice President Preston Brewer, partnered with The Task Force Dagger Foundation to aid in the cleanup from Key West to Summerland Key. The groups focused on heavy work including using large chainsaws, a bulldozer and backhoe, and often deployed over 20 people at times from both organizations.



### Save Our Pines

Save Our Pines provided support to the Park Service and Tom Domiano of Arbortech, while they worked tirelessly restoring the pine forest to a safe and inviting space for families to relax and unwind away from the stress of recovery.



### Old Island Restoration Foundation

The Foundation provides grants to individuals and tax-exempt organizations for preserving the architectural and/or cultural heritage of Key West. This year OIRF is giving higher priority for proposals involving Hurricane Irma damage repair and increasing the amount available.



### St. Peter's Episcopal Church

The organization was able to provide our community with clothing, water, toiletries and food from its Food Bank. The organization is always happy to serve our community in time of devastation and other times. Special thanks to Alelia Butler, who has worked tirelessly in St. Peter's Thrift Shop before and after Hurricane Irma.



### St. Paul's Episcopal Church

From the very first days after the storm, the Church was involved with recovery and meeting the needs of people with food, shelter, relocation, and rebuilding. Parishioners were able to obtain donations of food, building supplies, tools, and volunteers to help with debris removal and providing basic immediate needs.



United Way of the Florida Keys



### Wesley House Family Services

Wesley House ensured that all of the children and families they serve in the Keys had a safe place to return after the hurricane. Many client families and foster and adoptive families had significant damage or lost everything. Relief donations were used to provide food, clothing, toys, and repairs, and financial assistance helped with rent and daycare fees.



### Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden

As stewards of one of our city's oldest tourist attractions, the organization's volunteers toiled to help nature revive this conserved patch of native ecosystem, teach children the natural cycle of destruction and renewal, re-green the Keys with native plants from the nursery, and welcome the public back.



### Anchors Aweigh Club

Anchors Aweigh Club opened the day after Irma passed providing meetings for the recovering community. They provided hot coffee, water and distributed food for both the recovering community and the community at large.



### Key West Orchid Society

Many Keys orchid enthusiasts lost most or all of their beautiful plants. Members of the Orchid Society have been actively aiding them to rescue their plants from the storm-induced debris, helping them to rebuild their demolished orchid structures, and replenish their collections.



### Monroe Association for ReMARCable Citizens

MARC staff put aside their own homes and families to evacuate to Orlando with the MARC clients. They stayed with the clients for two weeks in hotel rooms, even after the power went out for three days while there, transporting, cooking, bathing, toileting, and keeping their spirits up while awaiting the ability to come back to the Keys.



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