



31 YEARS OF
IMPACT



the **immokalee**
foundation
education. empowerment. hope.

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Somos los padres de Jimmy Perdomo jr y esta es una carta de agradecimiento a usted y a Immokalee Foundation por lo que hicieron por el.

Dios bendiga en todos los aspectos de su vida a todos los que trabajan en Immokalee Foundation los que donan su tiempo, sus fuerzas, sus recursos y su sabiduría para que jóvenes como Jimmy que ni siquiera nacieron en este país puedan tener la oportunidad de graduarse de la Universidad, gracias por no tener distinción con los jóvenes, por verlos de igual manera a todos.

Esta familia inmigrante estará eternamente agradecida con ustedes, de verdad gracias muchas gracias.

Familia Perdomo-Argueta

Gracias & Thank You

We are the parents of Jimmy Perdomo Jr., and this is a “thank you” letter to The Immokalee Foundation staff for all you have done for our son.

God bless you over all facets of your lives, and all those who work at The Immokalee Foundation who donated their time, their strength, their resources and their wisdom so that young people like Jimmy, who were not even born in this country, can have the opportunity to graduate from a college or university. Thank you for not making distinctions with young people, and for seeing them all the same way.

This immigrant family will be eternally grateful to you. Honestly, thank you very much.

Perdomo-Argueta Family



Jimmy Perdomo Jr. and family at his Florida International University graduation. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Geography.



Noemi Perez visits student interns onsite at Physicians Regional Healthcare System.



CELEBRATING 31 YEARS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

By Noemi Y. Perez
President and CEO

In September 2021, The Immokalee Foundation reached its milestone 30th year. And despite our planning, our public celebrations disappeared alongside practically every other event in Southwest Florida.

As we persevered through our 30th and ventured into our 31st year, a remarkable thing happened—YOU.

Though I am incredibly grateful for our generous benefactors and supporters, these extraordinary individuals



Immokalee Foundation interns Marianna B. at Clive Daniel Home and Ivan G. at Naples Air Center.

and organizations, together with a new group of passionate supporters, took us to exciting new heights—making “31” a brand new reason to celebrate.

The Wasie Foundation put forth our first million-dollar match, which was immediately accepted by The Ray Foundation—a \$2 million week!

As our Career Pathways program is training the workforce of the future, the Southwest Florida business community rallied behind us in incredible new ways: providing dozens of internships, hosting career panels and field trips, and participating in our first annual CEO Summit. This extraordinary new event brings Foundation students and high-profile business leaders together for education and networking.

With the remarkable support of BCB

Homes and Collier Enterprises, our Learning Lab home-construction project in Immokalee continues to grow and gain national attention from media and educators. Not only are we training the next generation of engineering and construction management professionals, but we’re building homes for middle-class families who wish to call Immokalee their home.

Our partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University continues to flourish. This past summer, 114 middle school and high school students in business management and entrepreneurship, education and human services, and healthcare took one more important step on their pathways to success as part of educational summer camps at Florida Gulf Coast University.

We placed 100% of our rising high school seniors in summer internships

and well over 100 community members volunteered their time each week to mentor enthusiastic Immokalee Foundation students.

Our only limitation is having the funds necessary to support an even larger number of deserving students—to guide them to reach their full potential; to show them what is possible when we are all given an equal chance. Though we create programming for kindergarten through postsecondary education, we currently support only about one-fourth of Immokalee’s students—and there’s so much more to be done.

If you’re already wondering: How can I help? I promise you that the inspiration you’re looking for can be found in the pages ahead. Please, join us.



The Immokalee Foundation's Paulina Magaña, Yaresly Gorosquieta, Amber Barr, Noemi Perez, Maria Reyes and Walt Buchholtz at the FCAN Conference.

FLORIDA COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK RECOGNIZES INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

By Stephen D. Pryor

What would you think about a new approach to education that breaks the failed paradigm of one-size-fits-all public education and the tyranny of low expectations...an approach that enables every student to discover their pathway to a professional career and pursue that career after high school, either in college or the workplace?

For the past four years, The Immokalee Foundation's President and CEO, Noemi Perez has led the implementation of

Career Pathways, a program that breaks new ground in preparing students for well-paying professional careers.

The Florida College Access Network (FCAN) recently recognized this achievement by naming Noemi their 2022 College Ready Florida Innovator. FCAN is a collaborative network of organizations and individuals committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve a postsecondary education. The College Ready Florida Innovator Award recognizes those trying new approaches to help

students get into and pay for college while inspiring younger students to plan for their futures.

The story of The Immokalee Foundation dates back to 1991, when Naples philanthropist Parker L. Collier founded the organization.

At that time, Noemi Perez was a third grader and a child of agricultural workers living in Immokalee.

As a young mother in high school, Noemi made a life-changing decision to pursue a college degree, leading to her graduation from Hodges University and an exciting job with The Immokalee Foundation. Ten years later, she became the Foundation's President and CEO, the first person from the community to head up the Foundation. Noemi embodies the Foundation's belief in the potential of every student to overcome obstacles and succeed.

As The Immokalee Foundation's new leader, Noemi's top priority was to improve the employment outcomes of our graduates. The Career Pathways program was created to prepare students for professional careers in Southwest Florida in one of four broad industry sectors which will have the highest demand for skilled workers: Business Management &

Entrepreneurship, Education & Human Services, Engineering & Construction Management and Healthcare.

Middle school students explore the four career pathways through after-school and summer programs; then, in high school, they earn industry certifications, take courses at local colleges, and have paid internships. By the time they graduate from high school, these young pre-professionals have multiple options for pursuing their careers, including entering the workforce, earning an advanced certification, or pursuing a college degree.

The Secret Sauce that creates this success is a unique public/private partnership of educators, like Florida Gulf Coast University; businesses, like BCB Homes; dedicated employees and mentors; generous donors who have more

than doubled their financial support over the past four years; and of course, our students and their supportive families.

For everyone involved, participation in this mission is a master class in love of neighbor that enlarges the heart. So please consider a visit to Immokalee to meet our hard working students and staff, and visit our Learning Lab, where student interns are building new homes selling for over \$260,000. At the very least, it will recharge your belief in the American Dream.

Stephen D. Pryor is a current board member and former Board Chair of The Immokalee Foundation. Pryor retired as president of ExxonMobil Chemical Company in January 2015, after more than 43 years of ExxonMobil service.



Brulio Colón, Vice President of Florida Student Success Initiatives, Helios Education Foundation; Noemi Y. Perez, President and CEO, The Immokalee Foundation; Dr. Tonjua Williams, President, St. Petersburg College; and Charleita M. Richardson, Executive Director, Florida College Access Network.

RAISING \$2 MILLION IN ONE WEEK WAS A DREAM COME TRUE

By Joyce Hagen

When I visited Immokalee in 2010 as a new board member, I was most impressed with the dreams of the parents and how those dreams resonated with their children. These parents, all of them economically challenged, were keen to work and sacrifice to achieve the American Dream, which meant surrounding their children with a stable and loving environment and prioritizing an education that would allow them to thrive. The Immokalee Foundation provided mentoring and educational support to get the first generation of Immokalee children to college.

While the children and parents were working hard, the board and staff were dreaming big, too. Fifteen years ago, my husband, Don Fites, had a vision for a heavy equipment postsecondary program that would launch young adults into immediate lucrative careers with employers like Caterpillar.

In 2016, the board began to talk about an innovative approach to fill the gap between the Heavy Equipment Program and traditional college. Many more opportunities awaited these students. It took a collaborative dream and a leap of faith on the part of the board to create Career Pathways, an end-to-end program for the most in-demand professions in Southwest Florida—careers that promised financial stability for a new generation of Americans in Immokalee.



Angel A. at The Immokalee Foundation's Shark Tank-themed "What's Your Pitch?" presents his business idea to the judges as Corey Lazar from WINK News looks on.

From the beginning, we tracked how the students progressed through their college experience, how they acclimated, where they fell short, and what sorts of jobs graduates were able to procure.

How could we build an engine that would steer Foundation kids to careers that were waiting for them in healthcare, education, business, and construction?

We used real job data and interviews



Career Pathways students Maleighna M., Ashley M. and Dalia S. work on a group project.

with students and the business community to build the model. Our leap of faith was firmly rooted in a long history of reliable data and the leadership of our President and CEO, Noemi Perez, who has the best credential of all, having grown up in Immokalee.

Our donors have been consistently generous, starting with Parker L. Collier over 30 years ago. They visit Immokalee, review the data, and most importantly, meet our impressive Immokalee scholars. Board members from 25 years ago are still proffering yearly gifts. They are confident that their support will be used responsibly to make this mission a reality.

The Ray and Wasie Foundations recently made history for The Immokalee Foundation.

The Wasie Foundation pledged a \$1 million matching grant to help support The Immokalee Foundation's groundbreaking student programs. The Ray Foundation met the match with an additional \$1 million.

The pledge by The Wasie Foundation was the first million-dollar match challenge in The Immokalee Foundation's history.

The Ray and Wasie Foundations have a strong history with The Immokalee Foundation, having supported The Immokalee Foundation's innovative Career Pathways Learning Lab—a hands-on professional training hub and home to a future 18-home subdivision located in the heart of Immokalee.

Had I been informed of all that would be accomplished in The Immokalee Foundation over 12 years, I would have said that such results could only be a dream come true. And so it is—all the way from

the vision of the parents to the successful lives and careers of their children.

Joyce Hagen is a retired healthcare executive with more than 30 years of C-Suite-level experience. A former member of The Immokalee Foundation's Board of Directors, she and her husband, Donald V. Fites, are involved in numerous philanthropic activities in Naples.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY TAKES CENTER STAGE

By Linda Salazar

Reading comprehension is described as an active process that engages the reader to construct meaning from text. As a student progresses in school, the text becomes more complex in structure (think science and social studies type text), making learning to read one of the biggest challenges children face.

The brain is wired for speech but not necessarily for the written word. While children can passively acquire language, reading must be actively taught. Despite active teaching and student effort, many students face obstacles to successfully mastering grade-level reading.

The Immokalee Foundation has established a framework for a unique after-school program, Immokalee Readers. This life-changing curriculum is available at all five Immokalee elementary schools and a charter school.

Early-year classroom testing data determines which students need after-school academic support. After school is an excellent time to foster reading fluency and a love of reading. Students are ready to apply and extend their learning in new activities.

Certified teachers work with small groups of students to provide targeted intervention. The Foundation provides trained high school-aged tutors—69 total in 2021—primarily from the Education & Human Services Pathway. Supervised by the teacher, the tutors provide enhancement, repetition (practice) and FUN!

Tutors enjoy working with teachers on lesson plans with clear objectives and interjecting creative ideas to make the learning enjoyable.

Each elementary after-school program in Immokalee is slightly different. While maintaining important framework components, The Immokalee Foundation allows each school to address the needs of its school as well as the students' needs. What remains the same is the quality of the program, teachers, and wonderful outcomes.

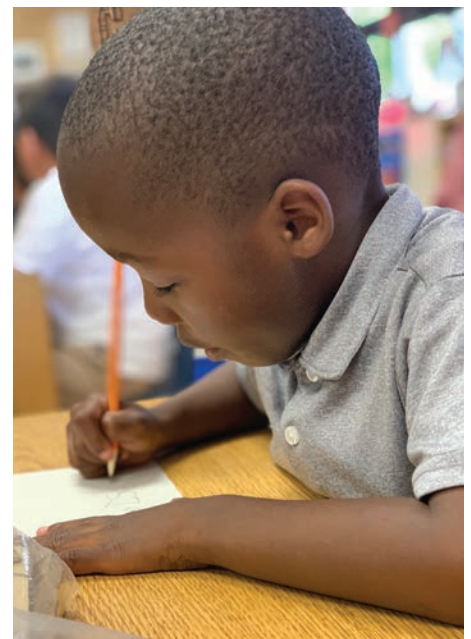
Individual student data to determine progress toward grade-level reading proficiency is compiled to ensure the success of each student and the school program overall. During the 2021-2022 instructional school year, 798 students participated in the K-5 elementary after-school programs. Ninety-seven percent of the students made academic gains.

Data offers proof of success, but what you cannot see is the eagerness with which students arrive at a safe and welcoming classroom; the smiles of

youngsters as they receive high fives and experience success; the confidence with which they participate in smaller groups; and ultimately, the positive change that is created in each child.

The data provides you with a great return-on-investment report. The smiles, confidence, and joy are priceless!

Linda Salazar is a retired Collier County Public Schools educator. Her experience includes leading school teams to increase student achievement at low-performing schools in Immokalee. A former member of The Immokalee Foundation's Board of Directors, Linda along with her husband, Pete Salazar, are involved in philanthropic activities in the Immokalee area.





DISCOVERING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS

By Brian Rist

As business leaders, it is our responsibility to share our experiences and lessons learned with those about to become future leaders.

Several years ago, I was introduced to The Immokalee Foundation and instantly became a raving fan. Few local programs do more to mold and prep students for success.

Through The Rist Family Foundation, I am fortunate to spend time with groups of students regularly. However, each time I spend time with the talented and disciplined students from Immokalee, I

am overwhelmed by the professionalism, dedication, and positive attitudes of these rising stars.

I have also had a front-row seat as a judge and a panelist for two of the Foundation's innovative business development programs.

The Immokalee Foundation's First Annual CEO Leadership Summit featured a networking hour followed by a speaker's panel of business leaders.

Emceed by WINK News' Corey Lazar, I was joined on this prestigious panel by Ryan D. Carter, President of Scotlynn USA Division; David Corban, President of David Corban Architects, PLLC; Scott

Lowe, Market CEO of Physicians Regional Healthcare System; Gail Markham, Founder of Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Co., P.A.; Michael Wynn, President of Sunshine Ace Hardware and Chairman of Wynn Family Companies; and Sandra Stilwell Youngquist, CEO of Stilwell Enterprises and Restaurant Group.

So often, when you meet young students, they are stuck in a shell with their heads down with little or no eye contact—and certainly no advanced skills towards establishing a conversation. This is not the case with The Immokalee Foundation students.



Jennifer T. and Daniel P. present at the Foundation's "What's Your Pitch?" event at Florida Gulf Coast University.

When The Immokalee Foundation students entered the room, they were there to do business.

Multiple individuals quickly engaged the panel with meaningful, well-thought-out questions, and thought-provoking conversations. Their style was far from one and done, but rather an opening that led to stimulating conversation, far more refined than their age and experiences would normally lead to.

“What’s Your Pitch?” is a Shark-Tank-themed event and the culmination of The Foundation’s four-week educational camp hosted by Florida Gulf Coast University.

It showcases teams of high school students, ages 14 to 16, from the Business Management&EntrepreneurshipPathway. Each team works to identify a problem or opportunity, create an innovative solution, and develop a sustainable business model for their concept.

In life, we are not all dealt a winning hand—and these students are often dealt even less—but through the Foundation’s programs, you quickly see these students excel at playing the cards they have been dealt.

They overcome so much and shine so brightly you can’t help but be amazed by their progress and enthusiasm. These students commit their time and put in the hard work necessary to become future leaders and break the chains attempting to hold them back.

Brian Rist is the Past Executive Chairman and founder of Storm Smart Industries and a local philanthropic leader through The Rist Family Foundation.



Ashley M. and Paola M. at the first annual CEO Summit.



Stanley B. and Yesenia B at the first annual CEO Summit.



Immokalee Foundation student Luz Celeste H. completes her initial Public Service Academy training.

EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES PATHWAY

CCSO & IMMOKALEE FOUNDATION'S PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS CAREERS IN PUBLIC SAFETY

By Kevin Rambosk

Collier County Sheriff

As other law enforcement agencies struggle to hire enough 911 emergency dispatchers, the Collier County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) found a new and innovative way to fill these positions with help from The Immokalee Foundation.

Launched in August of 2021, the Public Safety Career Academy is a partnership with the Foundation that trains high school students and young adults in

Immokalee for a career in dispatching at CCSO. Students who attend the academy are part of the Foundation's Education & Human Services Pathway—one of four pathways that comprise the innovative Career Pathways Program, which helps prepare students for in-demand, professional careers in Southwest Florida.

The Foundation has been a Collier County mainstay for more than 30 years, focusing on education and professional development for students

in Immokalee from kindergarten through postsecondary education. It has been providing pathways to success for those who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to succeed.

As your Sheriff since 2009, I have created a multitude of programs and initiatives aimed at keeping Collier County a great place and a safe place. The success of these initiatives depends on the support of the community. I am a strong believer in community partnerships.



Collier County Sheriff Kevin Rambosk

Let me tell you that I couldn't be more proud of our Public Safety Career Academy and our terrific relationship with The Immokalee Foundation.

Together we have developed a model program in Collier County that other agencies could adopt or use to address critical dispatcher staffing shortages facing agencies across the nation.

Three Foundation students who graduated from the academy are currently working as dispatchers in our Communications Center. Admirably, two of them, Halim and Luz Celeste, completed the overall training program in roughly six months as opposed to the traditional 12 months it typically takes to train a dispatcher.

Overall, the academy has proven to be successful in accelerating the training of

our dispatchers allowing for faster on-the-job training time.

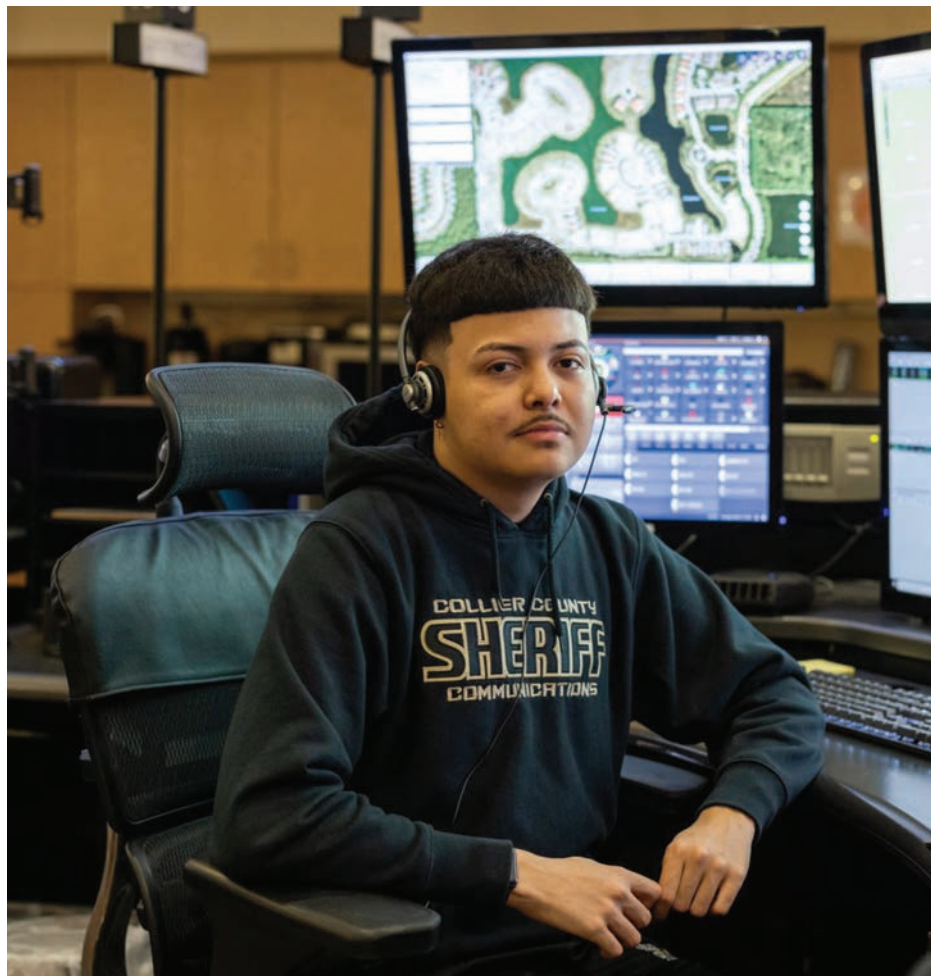
Students who finish the CCSO academy will have completed the 232-hours of training required to take the exam to become state certified as a public safety telecommunicator in Florida. As they learn, they also begin the application and hiring process at CCSO.

The goal is that once they complete the certification program and pass the state test, they will be ready to start on-the-job-training as a full-time dispatcher at CCSO, starting at \$18.02 an hour with full benefits.

In addition to classroom instruction, the students go on field trips for a behind-the-scenes look at how

the Sheriff's Office and other first responder agencies operate. They tour our 911 Communications Center and Special Operations facility, Naples Jail Center, and Collier County Emergency Operations Center.

They also participate in agency ride-alongs and hear speakers from CCSO SWAT, Training Bureau, Road Patrol, Technical Bureau, Investigations, Traffic, Human Resources, Crime Scene, as well as Collier County Emergency Medical Services and local fire districts.



Immokalee Foundation alum Halim Frias on the job as a CCSO 911 emergency dispatcher.



March 2023

ImmokaleeFoundation.org/ProAm



CEO SUMMIT

APRIL 17, 2023

ImmokaleeFoundation.org/CEOSummit

Join Us

*Embark on a journey of The Immokalee Foundation's
thirty-one years of making dreams come true.*



Chairs

Janet & Jerry Belle
Carol & Thomas Joseph

Friday, November 11, 2022

The Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort, Naples
ImmokaleeFoundation.org/Gala



One of the most gratifying scenarios possible is when education meets entertainment—when purpose meets play. When two worlds combine on a shared, noble mission.

During the time our events were on pause, though our supporters rallied behind us in unexpected and astonishing new ways, a piece of our collective magic was lost: The connection of donors and allies to the benefactors of their generosity—the students of The Immokalee Foundation.

With the return of in-person events, I'm proud to share that our 2022 Pro-Am raised the bar with a total of over \$600,000 raised. Our latest addition, the CEO Summit, will be expanded this year due to the success of our initial outing. And our signature event, the Charity Classic Gala, will return to the ballroom this November with a promise to shine like never before.

Regardless of which exciting events you attend this year, Immokalee Foundation students will be on hand—perhaps to lead, most certainly to learn, but definitely to show their gratitude for how you—through your attendance and life-changing contributions—help to make their dreams come true.

Please, join us~

Marie Hernandez Rubenstein
Vice President of Philanthropy



Physicians Regional's Scott Lowe and The Immokalee Foundation's Noemi Perez with Healthcare Pathway student interns.

HEALTHCARE PATHWAY

SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE EDUCATION FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

By Scott Lowe

Market CEO

Physicians Regional Healthcare System

As the CEO of an organization that places a premium on the concept of caring, Southwest Florida's emphasis on philanthropy has always been a source of pride. As part of our new education initiative, Physicians Regional is proud to join forces with one of our region's leading educational non-profits, The Immokalee Foundation.

And our goal? To provide hands-on experiential learning opportunities in support of The Immokalee Foundation's Healthcare Pathway—and the students who will become our community's healthcare leaders.

Over the last several years, Physicians

Regional made significant investments in infrastructure, staff, and service offerings in anticipation of the future health care needs of an ever-expanding Southwest Florida. This past summer, we added The Immokalee Foundation's Healthcare Pathway students to this list of necessary investments.

With 30+ years under its belt, The Immokalee Foundation has a rich history of student success. Their alumni are already working throughout Southwest Florida as physicians, nurses, physical therapists, technicians and more.

And this next generation of health care scholars is just as motivated to succeed as their predecessors.

This initiative doesn't just represent a win/win for these very dedicated students and our team, but it's also a win for our region's patient population. Just as our collective health care needs will increase in the future, these amazing young men and women are preparing today to be there for all of us when the time comes.

Our initial support consisted of funds for the Foundation's recent Healthcare Summer Camp at Florida Gulf Coast University. Beneficiaries included 40 Foundation students, ages 14-17, whose plans involve careers in pediatrics, nursing, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, endovascular neurosurgery, occupational therapy, audiology and more.

We also hosted 12 interns at our Pine Ridge and Collier Boulevard hospitals

this past summer. Participating students, all rising high school seniors, had the opportunity to shadow health care professionals in various specialties and participate in medical office support activities.

Plus, in support of the Foundation's robust Mentor Program, Physicians Regional will match students in the Healthcare and Business Management & Entrepreneurship Pathways with staff members best suited to enhance their individual educational journeys.

By supporting The Immokalee Foundation and its students, we are not only able to cultivate and grow our own labor force, but we are also contributing to the professional development of a worthy group of young people.

Together, we're showing them that we care about their future.



Jimenez A., Liliana S. and Woodelene P. onsite at Physicians Regional Healthcare System.



Ariana T., Yuridia P. and Mauricio P. with Physicians Regional's Scott Lowe at the CEO Summit.



Carlos Moreno instructs Engineering & Construction Management Pathway student Liliana T. at The Learning Lab home construction project.

BUILDING FUTURE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LEADERS

By Carlos Moreno

Assistant Superintendent, BCB Homes

The Immokalee Foundation is building an 18-home subdivision in Immokalee that is serving as a hands-on professional career experience for Foundation students following the Foundation's curriculum for Engineering and Construction Management and Business Management & Entrepreneurship.

The Learning Lab not only serves as the Foundation's Engineering and Construction Management internship, but also provides hands-on training for Immokalee Technical College (iTECH) postsecondary and dual enrollment high school students.

Since the Foundation started building homes, we have had 98 students participate in the Learning Lab internship program during the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic school years.

Working with iTECH and BCB Homes, The Immokalee Foundation developed the curriculum to prepare students to enter the engineering and construction management professions.

Students participating in the program earn the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10-hour (OSHA-10) regulatory training certificate required to work on a construction

site. They can also earn the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCEER) core construction and construction technology certificates.

It is commercially and logistically impractical to find internships at existing residential construction sites while maintaining the quality of instruction and training needed to complete the industry certifications before graduation. The Learning Lab addresses the critical need for hands-on professional career experience.

As a former Foundation student and current Foundation parent, it is especially gratifying to be the Assistant Superintendent for BCB Homes on this project. After graduating from Immokalee High School in 2008, I was offered a summer internship with BCB Homes – a role that eventually led to a full-time position and long-term employment. Now, I have come full circle to train the next generation of construction professionals.

The Immokalee Foundation has undertaken this project with BCB Homes as the general contractor and iTECH supporting onsite education instruction. BCB Homes' subcontractors are selected based on the understanding that this is a

non-profit job training project.

Three home models are being built with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, two car garages and a lanai. Home construction has been underwritten by generous donors, including Collier Community Foundation, Patricia and Donald Altorfer, Karen Hendricks, Barbara and Dale Morrison, Louise Penta, and The Wasie Foundation. Once completed, the new homes are sold at market price to support future construction. The students are constructing about three homes per year.

I am grateful to work for BCB Homes, and I am thrilled they are supporting the Learning Lab. These students aren't just learning bankable skills; they are the future of our industry as well, especially on the management level.

The Learning Lab even gained national media recognition through a UNIVISON television news broadcast.

Not only is this a great learning experience for students, but it also provides quality housing for middle-income professionals who want to live, work, and raise their families in Immokalee.



HST PREPARES STUDENTS FOR CAREERS THROUGH ACCREDITATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

By Steve and Cathy O'Brien

It's an exciting time for Leo Jimenez Ramirez, a first-year Heavy Equipment Service Technician (HST) student. Leo just completed a paid summer internship with Everglades Equipment Group, a full-service John Deere dealership.

Raised in Immokalee by his parents, farm workers Luis Jimenez and Graciela Ramirez, Leo is the oldest of three sons. As the first grandchild, Leo was often found with his grandfather, a mechanic who fixed cars and repaired trucks in his spare time. Mr. Marin encouraged Leo to "do what you love—first as a hobby."

Leo, who loves working with his hands, is taking his grandfather's advice to heart by learning diesel and heavy equipment—and turning what he loves into a profitable HST career.

Don Fites, the retired chairman and CEO of Caterpillar Inc., played an instrumental role in guiding the HST program's creation in 2010.

Today, graduates learn how to service heavy-duty, high-performance vehicles designed for executing earthwork operations and other large construction tasks that are essential in Southwest Florida.

The Immokalee Foundation covers the cost of tuition, training tools, and equipment—and provides a counselor to guide students successfully through the two-year HST program.

HST graduates are equipped with industry and state certifications such as Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) exams in diesel engines, brakes, electrical and preventive maintenance and inspection.

Plus, HST expertise is in high demand. Overall employment of heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians is projected to grow 11% from 2020 to 2030, greater than the average for all occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Long term, Leo has a special interest in electrical/electronic systems and preventive maintenance inspection. Equipment is becoming increasingly technology driven. More certifications improve individual earning potential, and technicians must retest every five years to maintain certifications.

Since these credentials can be used in every state, Leo hopes to travel for work assignments and experience more of the country he loves.

Steve and Cathy O'Brien are retired media professionals living in Naples who have volunteered to create the Eye on Immokalee column for the last two years.



HST student Leoncio Jimenez Ramirez.



GRATITUDE

The Immokalee Foundation is an organization built on generosity and gratitude. Despite the hardships that may befall our hardworking students, we teach them to focus on what they can do as opposed to what they can't do.

Every now and then this extraordinary “can-do” attitude is reflected in such a profound way that finding the words to express our appreciation borders on impossible.

Yes, there are those who go beyond the call of duty, who raise the bar to extreme heights—and then there's BCB Homes, Collier County Public Schools, Collier Enterprises, Florida Gulf Coast University, and Immokalee Technical College.

You mean the world to the students of Immokalee.

Thank you

Gracias

Mèsi



the **immokalee**
foundation



**COLLIER
ENTERPRISES**



iTECH
Immokalee Technical
COLLEGE

FINDING RENEWED PURPOSE BY SUPPORTING IMMOKALEE FOUNDATION STUDENTS

By Maureen Lambe

Upon retiring and moving to Marco Island, I was excited to resume volunteer activities. Earlier in my career, I had volunteered as a tutor, working with second through sixth-grade students enrolled in Chicago's Cabrini Green Tutoring Program. My immediate focus was to find a non-profit organization with a mission aligned with my passion for education and my experience in workforce development.

After reading about The Immokalee Foundation in Marco Island's Coastal Breeze News, I jumped on their website and noticed that the Foundation had addressed all the pitfalls I had experienced in my career as Executive Vice President of an industry education institute.

Though retirement sounded so appealing, I quickly realized I was ready to be put to the test again. So, I completed my Mentor/Volunteer application, and soon I was meeting with my mentee, Jennifer, a rising ninth grader following the Foundation's Business Management & Entrepreneurship Pathway.

I loved it so much; I wanted MORE! Today, I volunteer at The Immokalee Foundation's Naples office twice a week in support of the dedicated Philanthropy team.

I have worked registration at the Charity Classic Pro-Am Golf Tournament and the CEO Leadership Summit. These events gave me better insight into The Immokalee Foundation's talented staff,

and dedicated and generous board members. They understand they have the unique opportunity to work with students and families from elementary school through college, guiding children to become successful men and women who can achieve their dreams.

At the CEO Leadership Summit, I saw high school seniors, professionally dressed and confident, introducing themselves to high-profile local CEOs and engaging executives in conversations about internships and career opportunities.

My favorite event was the 2022 Foundation Graduation Celebration for graduates and their families.

The pride I saw in every staff member as they interacted with graduates and families was extraordinary.

Then again, "family" is perhaps the best word to describe the special relationship between this talented team and the very deserving community they so lovingly support.

I pinch myself each time I enter The Immokalee Foundation office. I cannot believe I found such a worthy and successful non-profit to support with my time. Across the entire organization, I see a passion for the Foundation's robust educational programs, pride in each student's academic and career success, and the sincere belief that there's nothing more important than improving the lives of Immokalee's youth.

Maureen Lambe is a retired industry education institute executive from Washington, DC.



Maureen Lambe celebrating with members of the Class of 2022.

IMMOKALEE FOUNDATION INTERNS EXCEL IN MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES

By Drew Yurko

CFO, Lipman Family Farms

Especially in these low single-digit unemployment rate times, the Southwest Florida business community is extremely grateful for creative ways to attract, train and retain emerging talent.

The Immokalee Foundation's growing internship program is ideally suited to address this important economic issue. Featuring individuals who are blossoming in professions that include communications, healthcare, accounting, construction, and design, The Foundation's internship program is a key connector between a supply of tomorrow's leaders with the strong current demand for these skill sets in Southwest Florida.

Southwest Florida is home to a vibrant business community that is in a growth mode due to geographic blessings, a large influx of new residents, and an increased conversion of snowbirds to full timers. As

a result, the need to add additional ambitious individuals to employment rosters will only continue to expand.

The Immokalee Foundation's students are at the front of their careers and demonstrate intelligence, respect, dependability, teamwork and the possession of a good attitude.

At the end of the day, the symbiotic relationship between the Foundation's internship program and the Southwest Florida business community creates a win/win situation. One of the greatest resources of Southwest Florida is the next generation. And, they are ready to work with you today!

In addition to his role at Lipman Family Farms, Drew Yurko is Treasurer of The Immokalee Foundation's Board of Directors.



Alexis V. onsite at her internship with WGPU Public Media.

This past summer, the following organizations hosted Immokalee Foundation student interns:

- Arthrex
- Avow Hospice
- Collier County Sheriff's Office
- Clive Daniel Home
- Lipman Family Farms
- Naples Air Center
- Naples Art
- Pathways Early Education Center of Immokalee
- Physicians Regional Healthcare System
- Results Care
- Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
- Salvation Army
- Taste of Immokalee
- WGPU Public Media



Rosalinda R. and Jason R. interning at Rookery Bay Environmental Research Center.

JOEL GUERRERO NAMED LEADERS 4 LIFE FELLOW BY TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN

By Jerry Belle

Chairman of the Board

The Immokalee Foundation

When my wife Janet and I first became involved with The Immokalee Foundation after Hurricane Irma, our focus was on providing financial support for those in need. Due to our interest in education, we were introduced to The Immokalee Foundation. To make a short story even shorter, we fell in love with the staff, the “kids,” and the programs that support them.

When I was asked to be a mentor, I hesitated. I have had a successful business career and helped a number of my associates in their roles, but never with middle or high school students.

Still, when engaged in meaningful activities, we can see the fruits of our labor—and education provides that opportunity. But for those of us who are not trained educators, how does that work?

The Immokalee Foundation’s staff was very helpful in outlining the role of the mentor and the relationship with the mentee. Since the Foundation is an affiliate of the State of Florida’s Take Stock in Children (TSIC) Program, mentors are required for all students enrolled. The benefit? TSIC ensures a scholarship upon high school graduation for those students who complete the requirements.

My mentee Joel Guerrero and I have been meeting weekly for five years. We have covered a lot of ground, initially getting to know one another, then working on balancing the multiple challenges for students based on examples from the “adult world.” This was followed by numerous discussions on specific class assignments, scholarship applications, and relating current events to coursework.

Joel has been a model student and a model mentee. He has become a confident, articulate, diligent student with a clear focus on the future. Through hard work and persistence, Joel has acquired multiple scholarships that will enable him to complete his college education without financial worry.

Though I am proud that Joel considers me a valuable and trusted advisor, that does not compare to my tremendous pride over his accomplishments.

This year, Joel was named a Leaders 4 Life Fellow by Take Stock in Children. This honor comes with a \$40,000 scholarship that pays for college expenses not covered by any other award or financial aid, including leadership training and development, housing, food, textbooks, supplies, transportation, and other college-related expenses. Joel is one of only about 80 people to receive this award since its founding in 2010.

The Salutatorian of Immokalee High School’s Class of 2022, Joel is about



Jerry Belle and Joel Guerrero in a mentorship session.



Mark Asofsky, Managing Director of Asofsky Family Foundation, Joel Guerrero and Jerry Belle.

to enter Florida Gulf Coast University to pursue a degree in Biology, a stepping stone in his vision to become a dentist. And his ultimate goal? To serve the patient population in his hometown of Immokalee, Florida.

Consider me an example of an individual who had no clue about mentoring but has found it to be an extremely gratifying experience—just knowing that, in some small way, I have contributed to helping a young man achieve his dream.

Jerry Belle's career included almost 40

years in global pharmaceutical-related businesses. He retired in 2007, joined a number of publicly traded company Boards, chairing two of them, and retired with his wife Janet in Naples where they are full-time residents and both active in various local community organizations.



Janet Belle, Jerry Belle, Joel Guerrero and his family at the Class of 2022 Graduation Celebration in Immokalee.



THE IMMOKALEE FOUNDATION IMPACTS CLASS OF 2022

By Dr. Kamela Patton

Superintendent

Collier County Public Schools

Educating 48,000 students enrolled in the A-rated Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) takes a collective effort from our talented staff, parents, volunteers, and a network of community partners, like The Immokalee Foundation. Consider, for example, the inspirational story of Kenniya Miller who took advantage of our CCPS Advanced Studies program. As one of 3,400 CCPS graduates this year, she received her diploma from Immokalee High School while simultaneously earning her Associate of Arts (AA) degree from Florida SouthWestern State College. Remarkable!

Kenniya joined The Immokalee Foundation in kindergarten and received impactful guidance from the organization throughout her CCPS academic journey. Kenniya did not have to pay for her AA degree because dual enrollment courses are free to our Advanced Studies students who attend a Florida public college, technical center, or university. In the fall, Kenniya will be learning and living at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee.

CCPS staff work closely with The Immokalee Foundation President and CEO Noemi Perez and staff as strategic partners for Future Ready Collier, which is composed of representatives from organizations making a significant and sustained investment in Collier County.

The Immokalee Foundation helps students achieve success throughout their years in school and assists in preparing them for life beyond high school graduation.

Thirty-nine graduates (12%) of Immokalee High School's Class of 2022 were Immokalee Foundation students, enabling them to gain valuable insight from mentors and experiences like internships, networking events, guest lectures, and field trips outside of the time they spent on their high school campus. Eighteen graduated in the top 20% of their class and six of the top 10 graduates were Immokalee Foundation students.

Underscoring this impact is the fact that 100% of The Immokalee Foundation's students graduate from high school and 100% have a postsecondary plan to pursue a professional career. Ninety-two percent earn a postsecondary degree or certificate, with the majority receiving a four-year bachelor's degree.

Opportunities and guidance provided by The Immokalee Foundation align with our CCPS Strategic Plan to graduate students

who are college, career, and life ready.

The Foundation's Career Pathways — after-school and summer programs — show how career technical certifications benefit students heading straight into the workforce and those who are college-bound.

Strong educational partners — like The Immokalee Foundation — collectively benefit all of us, and I consider them a valued member of the CCPS Family for all the support they provide for our students and families.

It is thrilling to see what our CCPS alumni go on to achieve and how they positively



Superstar student Kenniya Miller.

impact their families and communities. Speaking of exceptional students, when Kenniya is at Florida A&M, she will be pursuing a degree in Biomedical

Engineering and Pre-Med. Kenniya represents the hope, transformation, and achievement possible for all our students.

Immokalee Foundation students who graduated in the top 10% of their high school class and their plans for the fall semester.

Joel Guerrero

Florida Gulf Coast University

Josica Previlus

Florida State University

Derek Parra

Florida Gulf Coast University

Brianna Patino

University of Florida

Aracely Velasco-Santos

Florida State University

Stephanie Robert

University of Florida

Alex Martinez-Juarez

Florida SouthWestern State College

Anna Astreide

Florida State University

Eloy Anzualda III

University of Florida

Pedro Francisco

Florida SouthWestern State College

Ketnise Pierre

Santa Fe College



Immokalee Foundation graduate and Florida SouthWestern State College student Leyhia M.

BECOME A MENTOR CHANGE A LIFE.

It's incredible what can be done in just 30 minutes a week.

If you believe in education and possess a caring and positive attitude, volunteering just one-half hour per week will reap often unexpected rewards for you and a student of Immokalee.

Located just 40 miles from downtown Fifth Avenue, the agricultural community of Immokalee – known as America's "tomato capital" – helps feed millions of people across the country. Just visit any restaurant in Southwest Florida, and there's an excellent chance that something produced in Immokalee is on the menu.

Despite Immokalee's immense contribution to Southwest Florida, many don't realize it is among the least educated and poorest communities in the United States, with a poverty rate of over 32%. Tragically, the poverty rate for children is even higher, with 97% of our children qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch according to the USDA eligibility guidelines.

Though you will most assuredly be changing the life of a driven Immokalee Foundation middle or high school student, the real-world benefits extend far beyond the obvious. Friendships. Fun. Success and Celebration.

Yes, as a mentor, you will change a student's life—but the other life being changed belongs to you.

Promise.



Mentor Don O'Neill and former mentee & Foundation alum Gerardo Lugo.



Mentor Patricia Sullivan and mentee Paola Martinez.

PLEASE CONTACT

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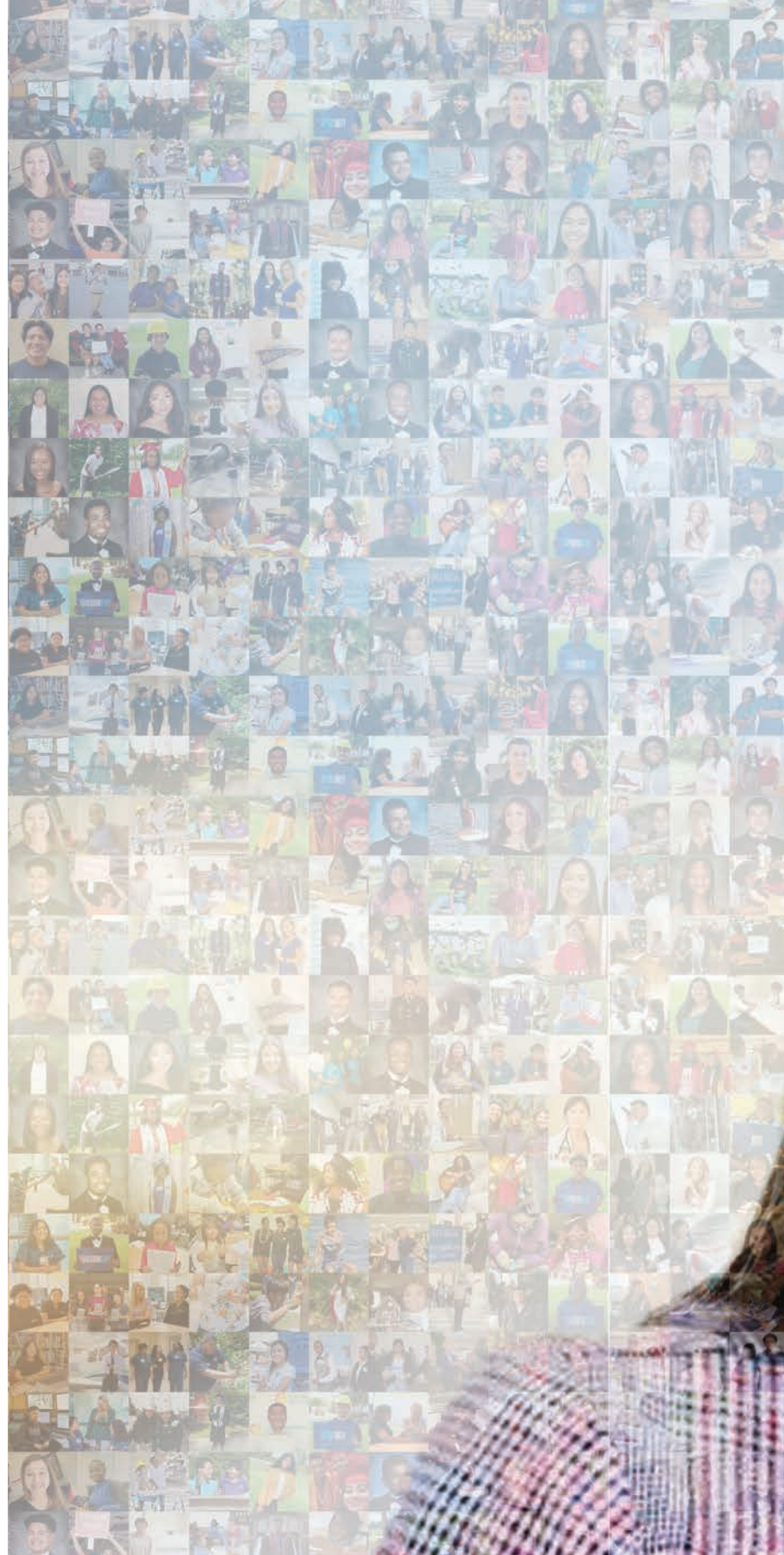
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