



Believing in our Kids!



Foundation E-News

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Dear Friends of the Foundation,

I am proud to share with you that the Education Foundation awarded 191 scholarships totaling \$467,000 to deserving students in Osceola County on May 13th. I can't tell you how heartwarming it was to see so many students walk across the stage to receive a scholarship that will help them further their education and realize their dreams for a brighter future. Harmony High School graduate Jon Ball received a scholarship through the Foundation's City of St. Cloud endowment and he will be entering college in the fall. Jon told us "It's going to be a great help paying for my education, so I won't have to worry about working so much." Jon plans on following a pre-law curriculum at USF. And, as you will read in this issue, Osceola High School graduate Clarisa Agosto received a scholarship after struggling to pass the FCAT and returning to high school to repeat her senior year. I could go on and on about the amazing students who received scholarships this year. But I'll close by saying thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers for your support of the Education Foundation throughout 2007 - 2008, and that I am looking forward to working with all of you in continuing our mission to enhance education in Osceola County in 2008 - 2009!

Sincerely,

Kathy Carr
Executive Director

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Bonefish Grill Raises \$7,900 at Charity Night Opening



Over 220 people experienced a "sneak peek" and enjoyed fresh seafood, refreshing cocktails, spectacular ambiance and music on Saturday, June

28 as the new Bonefish Grill in Kissimmee hosted its Grand Opening Charity Night to support the Education Foundation~Osceola County.

"Being part of the community means much more to us than just serving food," said Charles Kozmits, Managing Partner of Bonefish Grill Kissimmee, which opened its doors to the public on June 30. "By partnering with the Education Foundation~Osceola County we've taken an important step in fostering relationships, building a foundation of goodwill and helping out those who need assistance."

"We were very pleased that Bonefish Grill selected the Education Foundation - Osceola County as the beneficiary for their grand opening at The Loop West in Kissimmee," said Ken Smith, president of the Education Foundation. "Everyone in attendance seemed to have a great time; the food was wonderful, the atmosphere was relaxing, and the service was fantastic. Most importantly, this dining event raised \$7,906.00 to support the Education Foundation - Osceola County which assists The School District in continuing its tradition of excellence in educating students in Osceola County."

Photo from left to right: Charles Kozmits, Ken Smith, Warren Shelor, Pete Edwards, and Kathy Pierson

Help A Gift for Teaching~Osceola Collect School Supplies

Did you know it is estimated that more than 800 children in Osceola County are considered homeless? Did you know that more than 56% of our

students can't afford breakfast or lunch, much less basic school supplies such as pencils, crayons, glue, or paper? We do know that a child doesn't choose to be homeless. He or she wants to go to school like all the other boys and girls on their first day of school with their brand new Camouflage or High School Musical book bag filled with newly sharpened pencils and fancy pocket folders. But unfortunately, with over 800 homeless children returning to school, back to school brings additional financial burden rather than excitement about the first day of school.



This year, you can make a difference for many of these children by simply collecting basic school supplies at your place of work, affiliated organization, or just as a personal donation. It's a simple way to make a huge difference. Your collected supplies will be put directly into the hands of teachers who will be able to provide these needy supplies to children throughout Osceola County. As the economy struggles, let's join together to make sure our students have the learning tools they need to be successful. With something as simple as a crayon, children can learn to color their own bright futures.

Help us collect the following much needed basic school supplies:

- pencils, crayons, glue, notebook paper
- pens, markers, colored pencils, and highlighters
- pocket folders and binders
- scissors, protractors, compass
- calculators, index cards, erasers
- backpacks and lunch boxes

Have fun with your collection. Make it a friendly competitive game or encourage a 100% participation goal from your fellow staff members. Either way, you will be making a difference in education. Products may be dropped off at the Osceola location at 2310 New Beginnings Road in Kissimmee off of Simpson Road. Call us at 407-348-2370 for more information.

Welcome Back Expo - Good O'I Country Hoedown



The Education Foundation~Osceola County is looking forward to the 2008 Welcome Back Expo - Good O'I Country Hoedown. The event will be held at Osceola Heritage Park in the Exhibition Hall on Wednesday, September 3, from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The Welcome Back Expo is held each fall to

show our appreciation to the teachers and the school district employees of Osceola County. It is a time for these dedicated educators and employees to get excited about the new school year, see old friends, and learn about community opportunities for themselves and their students.

For questions about the event or for information regarding booth space please call Rena Woodley at (407) 870-4886.

Osceola High School Teen Achieves Goal and Wins Scholarship

Clarisa Agosto, a 2008 Osceola High School Graduate, received a \$2,000 scholarship to Valencia Community College on May 13th from the Education Foundation~Osceola County. One year ago, Clarisa was a high school senior unable to graduate due to inadequate FCAT scores. However, rather than accept a Certificate of Completion that would enable her to attend a community college, but would disqualify her for all financial aid opportunities, Clarisa chose to return to OHS and repeat her senior year. Through the guidance of OHS Career Specialist Jean Johnston, Clarisa, an ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) student, focused her studies heavily on math and reading and worked as Mrs. Johnston's teaching assistant. After completing her coursework, Clarisa took the ACT college entrance exam, achieved concordant scores which are equivalent to passing the FCAT, received her high school diploma, and will attend Valencia Community College in the fall of 2008. "The scholarship from the Education Foundation was a validation of all of Clarisa's hard work and determination." said Mrs. Johnston.



The Education Foundation~Osceola County awards scholarships annually to high school seniors through the Arts Alive! event at the Osceola Center for the Arts, as well as the Education Foundation Scholarship Awards Ceremony, both held each spring.

Photo from left to right: Diane Diaz, Newland Communities and Clarisa Agosto.

PBS&J Donates \$5,000 to Take Stock in Children



Two of the most critical problems facing Florida and Osceola County today are high dropout and youth crime rates. A proven strategy to keep kids on track in their academic and personal lives is to provide early intervention and long-term support.

In recognizing this fact, PBS&J recently presented a \$5,000 check to the Osceola County Take Stock in Children program, which helps deserving, low-income children by matching them with a volunteer adult mentor in 6th grade, monitoring their progress throughout high school, and then awarding them with a four-year college scholarship.

PBS&J Vice President Darrell Nance and Business Development Manager Kathy Putnam presented the grant to Ken Smith, President, and Kathy Carr, Executive Director (not pictured), of the Education Foundation of Osceola County, which coordinates the program. The grant was funded through The PBSJ Foundation, Inc. Through the TurboCharge2 Initiative, this \$5,000 donation is being matched at a rate of 6:1. Therefore, the \$5,000 grant from PBS&J will result in \$30,000 worth of scholarship money in Osceola County. This money will fund three, four-year scholarships for low-income Osceola students through the Florida Pre-Paid Foundation.

"We are thrilled to have PBS&J as a new scholarship donor in Osceola County," stated Carr.

"This generous donation will make the dream of a college education a reality for several deserving students."

"PBS&J is excited to be able to provide this opportunity for deserving Osceola students," said Nance. "Take Stock in Children has an impressive track record of setting high standards toward education. We are confident that our donation will help shape the future of the students who receive the scholarships."

Photo from left to right: Darrell Nance, Diane Parker, Ken Smith, and Kathy Putnam

Forbes Hamilton Management Company Supports Education

Forbes Hamilton Management Company, located in downtown Kissimmee, is the first Osceola County business to support education through the purchase of education specialty license plates for all of their company vehicles.



"I find this an easy way to support the educational system to which I have entrusted my four children" said Tom Johnsen, President of Forbes Hamilton. "By renewing each year, I continue my support of the Foundation, which in turn supports both the children and the educators of Osceola County." Johnsen purchased 4 tags to be placed on the Forbes Hamilton vehicles.

Residents and business owners of Osceola County who purchase the education specialty license plate contribute \$20.00 per tag (just .06 cents per day) to assist students, schools, and teachers in the county. Unlike other specialty license plates offered in Florida, money from the education tag stays in Osceola County and goes directly to the Education Foundation~Osceola County to support teachers and students in the school district.



For more information about purchasing an education specialty license plate, go to your local tag office, visit www.license4learning.com, or contact Pattie Burdick at 407-870-4855.

Photo from left to right: Tom Johnsen, Kathy Carr, and Ken Smith

Progress Energy to Enhance Math, Science, and Energy Education in District



The Progress Energy Foundation has generously awarded a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to the Education Foundation~Osceola County. This grant will be matched with other funding for a total grant of \$50,000. Debbie Clements from Progress Energy presented the check to Kathy Carr, Executive Director of the Education Foundation. The event took place at The School District of Osceola County's school board meeting on June 17, 2008.

Progress Energy's Energize Me grant will fund a program to offer competitive mini-grants of \$2,500 each to math and science teachers who wish to motivate and increase the interest of students in math, science, and energy education. Each mini-grant will be reviewed by a committee comprised of Education Foundation board members, members of a science and math network, educators, and people from the community. The highest scoring proposals will receive funding. By distributing funds in this manner each school and department will have an opportunity to compete for supplementary funds. Sunshine State Standards will provide direction for student learning of both math and science content and processes. Grade level expectations are recommended by the state, and will become the basis for state assessments. These mini-grants sponsored by Progress Energy will not only improve the learning environment but will also increase the population receiving benefits from the

program.

Progress Energy Florida, a subsidiary of Progress Energy (NYSE: PGN), provides electricity and related services to 1.7 million customers in Florida. The company is headquartered in St. Petersburg, Fla., and serves a territory encompassing more than 20,000 square miles including the cities of St. Petersburg and Clearwater, as well as the Central Florida area surrounding Orlando. Progress Energy Florida is pursuing a balanced approach to meeting the future energy needs of the region. That balance includes increased energy-efficiency programs, investments in renewable energy technologies and a state-of-the-art electricity system. For more information about Progress Energy, visit the company's Web site at www.progress-energy.com.

Photo from left to right: Debbie Clements, Kathy Carr

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With many Osceola County families struggling financially, it is imperative that the Education Foundation continues in its mission to bring resources and people together to support and enhance public education in Osceola County. Thank you to all those in the community who partner with the Foundation to assist us in helping our students and teachers!

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