Back to school in Key Largo just got busier with classes starting last week at the College of the Florida Keys (CFK) new Upper Keys Center located at the Keys gateway, MM 106, bayside.

CFK gave a heartfelt thank you to Friends at Ocean Reef Club, the Ocean Reef Community Foundation, The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, and many more who helped make this big idea become a reality at the Center’s grand opening Thursday, August 5.

Sharing his gratitude, CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra said, “Thank you for your support, your indulgence, your willingness to dream, to trust, to contribute financially, to take a major leap for the betterment of our community, and for every person who will benefit by what happens within these walls over the years.” He added, “This is only the beginning, but it is a beginning that represents hope and opportunity that results in social and economic mobility for our entire upper Keys community.”

The well-attended event featured many local community leaders excited about the wide range of programming certain to benefit the Upper Keys community - specifically law enforcement training for the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office, and a nursing program for local hospital systems in dire need for qualified nurses. Along with these areas, Ocean Reef Club will benefit directly from CFK’s focus on hospitality, marine science and trade apprenticeships.

Ocean Reef Member and Foundation Vice Chair Michael Berman was part of a video presentation, which included Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio. Yurianna Mikolay and Amy Cornaire from the Foundation represented the Ocean Reef effort in person along with the Club’s Chef Philippe Reynaud (with his daughter, who is enrolling), and Keith Young and Chris Grant from the Medical Center (which recently hired two nursing program graduates).

The impressive new building features nursing labs, a biochemical lab, an auditorium, a testing center and a library. In addition to learning spaces, lounges allow students and employees a comfortable place to learn and work. It also features a student activities room and a patio deck.

Visit the College’s website at www.cfk.edu/UKC to explore the exciting opportunities available at the Upper Keys Center.

Your support of the All Charities Weekend strengthens entities that enhance Ocean Reef Club’s Unique Way of Life and enables the Ocean Reef Community Foundation to provide for thousands in Key Largo, Homestead and Florida City. Call 305-367-5996 to learn more.