

ALL CHARITIES

The All Charities “Final Paddle Raise”



by Sarah A. Cart

There is a magical moment that comes at the end of the Saturday night Gala on All Charities Weekend (ACW, this season, **Feb. 20 - 22**). It's the “Raise Your Paddle” finale to the Live Auction, the moment when everyone in the room fully understands and embraces the full meaning of ACW. (Of note, you don't have to be in the room to take part in this magic – see the last paragraph of this article.)

We all know the good that happens INSIDE the gates thanks to the services and benefits provided by the Ocean Reef Community Foundation's (ORCF) Recipient Partners (The Reef's non-profits: the Medical Center, Cultural Center, Academy, Art

League, ORCAT, Conservation Association, and Chapel and Fellowship Center). Their strength is paramount to the success of Ocean Reef, providing an environment that allows *all of us* to thrive year-round. And ACW's Preferred Partners are the entities that, through their steadfast support, cash, and auction item donations, make it possible for ORCF to give *100 percent of the donations made by Club Members* to The Reef's non-profits as well as in the form of Community Grants to charities outside the gates.

But too, in addition to the funding the Recipient Partners receive via ACW, the Recipient Partners work directly with ORCF to help further extend the impact of the monies raised to assist entities in the Upper Keys, Homestead, and Florida City. It is thanks to the Recipient Partners' cooperation that *100 percent of the final paddle raise at ACW's Saturday night gala* is allocated to thoughtfully researched ORCF financial grants to empower the youth, families, and health of our neighboring communities.

And yet, how does ORCF determine where these grants go? It starts with ORCF's

Executive Director, Yuri Mikolay, and our fellow members of the Grants Committee, Chair **Janie Sims**, Vice Chair **Steve Woodsum**, **Cindy Brammer**, **Chris Covington**, **Alan Goldstein**, **Diane Hill**, **Marie Jacobs**, **Amy Joseph**, **Ed Kramer**, **Cynthia Lee**, **Kathie Markel**, **Linda Owens**, **Amy Upjohn**, **Kathy Weiland** and **Brad Young**.

The work they put in that you don't see is amazing. The Foundation's goal is to help our immediate neighborhoods: Florida City, Homestead and the Upper Keys ... neighborhoods we enjoy and where our Associates live. To do that, the Foundation strives to make an immediate impact by way of its grants directly to local charities' programs; these monies don't go to administrative charges – lost in a big pool of accounting – but rather, they are earmarked for the direct benefit of children, underprivileged families, special needs individuals,

and community assets. In other words, the monies are put to use at the grass roots level, for local community activities that directly benefit those who need it. You'd be hard put to give more directly than the dollars funded through these ORCF grants. To expand understanding of the process, the Foundation sponsors three or four tours a year for Members to visit some of these grant programs. After one such tour, one participant commented, “I love that we are funding the dreams of children.”

As this season's Reef Royale-themed ACW celebrates the glamour of giving, keep in mind that thanks to your generosity, the heartbeat of Ocean Reef will beat not only INSIDE our bubble, but will be felt in our surrounding communities.

Looking to be a part of the magic and help fund dreams? Contact the All Charities office at 305-367-5996 or allcharities@oceanreef.com.