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Naples Children & Education Foundation 2016 Social Impact Report Shows Improved Outcomes for Collier County Youth

Largest Funder of Social Services in Collier County Filling a Critical Void

Naples, FL – August 25, 2016 – Fifteen years after the inaugural Naples Winter Wine Festival, social, educational, and healthcare gaps for local children in Collier County have narrowed dramatically, according to a new Social Impact Report released today by the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF). The report, *“Filling in the Future,”* shows how funds raised at the Naples Winter Wine Festival make a critical difference in the community, broken down by grants NCEF awards to high-impact organizations in Collier County, as well as seven strategic initiatives that are fundamentally changing service delivery for the county’s most vulnerable children.

“In a county with no independent, tax-based, public financial support for children’s social services, our community relies on the support of generous donors who attend the Naples Winter Wine Festival and give substantial sums to improve children’s lives,” said Maria Jimenez-Lara, CEO of the Naples Children & Education Foundation. “Our research tells us that we’re changing outcomes for at-risk and underprivileged children in Collier County, and it’s imperative that we continue filling this critical void.”

Key findings from the Social Impact Report show that NCEF’s investments have been life-changing for hundreds of thousands of at-risk and underprivileged children and their families. Driven by independent studies commissioned by NCEF showing gaps in basic social services for Collier County’s kids, NCEF has made informed and research-based philanthropic investments with the goal of erasing these gaps. As a result, the Foundation has given grants to more than 40 organizations in Collier County, improving the lives of nearly 68,000 children with access to enriching after-school and summer programs; advocating for over 47,000 children with shelter, crisis counseling, mentorship, and other basic essentials; educating nearly 36,800 children through high-quality early childhood programs; and promoting healthy living by providing critical medical services to 37,000 children county-wide.

In order to ensure that NCEF is efficiently meeting the community’s most urgent needs, it also created seven multi-partner, multi-year strategic initiatives, convening a coalition of partners to work together in innovative ways. In the last five years alone, these strategic initiatives have made a dramatic difference in closing service gaps and improving outcomes for children:

- The number of children entering kindergarten “on grade level” has increased by 42%
- School suspension rates have decreased by 65%
- The graduation rate for at-risk youth has improved by 20%

- Juvenile arrests in Collier County have been reduced by 62%

NCEF's strategic initiatives have also had an impressive cumulative influence. Since the first strategic initiative was launched in 2006, each one has had the following impact:

- Children's Healthcare (est. in 2006) – 107,150 pediatric visits have been completed in a culturally competent setting, allowing the community's underserved children to get the medical attention they need in their own community. Before this project, Immokalee children had to travel to Naples and Fort Myers for primary and specialty health care.
- Children's Oral Health (est. in 2006) – 94,000 at-risk and underprivileged children have visited the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center, and 3,000 children were screened through a special mobile clinic. This Initiative mitigated the "catastrophic crisis" in oral health care for children in our community. This initiative allowed for uninsured and those on Medicaid to access pediatric dentistry without having to travel out of the county for basic dental care.
- Children's Mental Health (est. in 2007) – \$6,500,000 has been spent on identifying and alleviating children's mental health issues through the integration of primary and behavioral health services. Through this innovative project, children in need can now access mental health care that was otherwise not available county wide.
- Children's Early Learning (est. in 2008) – 1,250 children ages birth-5 years old have gained access to high quality teachers and affordable, education-focused care. This in turn has impacted the number of kindergarten students entering school "ready to learn."
- Children's Hunger (est. in 2011) – \$3,030,000 has been allocated to Harry Chapin Food Bank of SWFL and Meals of Hope to alleviate food insecurity (the fear of not knowing where your next meal will come from). Thousands of families to date now rely on centralized and consistent food distribution centers that provide nutritious food.
- Children's Out-of-School Time (est. in 2012) – 8,000 children have participated in innovative, groundbreaking programming to close gaps in education during after-school, holiday, and summertime hours. This Initiative has narrowed the achievement gap tremendously, elevating test scores, improving school attendance, increasing the number of high school graduates and the number of graduates that go on to post-secondary education.
- Children's Vision (est. in 2012) – 20,000 children have been screened for vision problems and 7,000 eye glasses have been distributed to children in need. School teachers and administrators report great improvement in academic performance, behavior and classroom participation, thanks to children being able to see properly with their new eyeglasses.

"We take our role seriously as the largest funder of social services in Collier County, and we are committed to meeting the needs of our community," said Susie McCurry, 2017 NCEF Grant Committee Chair. "When given the right tools, children have a remarkable ability to overcome difficult odds. We will continue working to ensure that every child gets the opportunities they deserve to succeed in life."

About The Naples Children & Education Foundation

The Naples Children & Education Foundation, the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is committed to improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted over 40 of the most effective nonprofits in the community, providing more than 200,000 children with the services and

resources they need to excel. For more information about NCEF, please visit www.napleswinefestival.com.

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