

# BeCAUSE They Care: Nonprofits in the news

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(Photo: Picasa)

## Florida Telecommunications Relay opens center in Lee County

Florida Telecommunications Relay, the nonprofit distributor of amplified telephones for people with hearing loss and speech challenges, has opened a new distribution center in Lee County at the Center for Independent Living Gulf Coast, 7011 Cypress Terrace, Suite 103, in Fort Myers.

At the distribution center, permanent Florida residents who are certified as having hearing loss or speech challenges can easily obtain amplified telephones and other telecommunications equipment at no cost.

For information, call 260-4575 or visit [ftri.org/gulfcoast](http://ftri.org/gulfcoast).

For Immediate Release / Photos Attached Contact: Jennifer Varoski, [jrvcommunications@gmail.com](mailto:jrvcommunications@gmail.com) or 239-777-1539

## Naples Equestrian Challenge honors volunteers

At a recent volunteer appreciation dinner, Naples Equestrian Challenge recognized the service of several volunteers including Sue Lottridge and Lea Haven along with the more than 350 other dedicated volunteers who make their work possible.

Lottridge was named the 2015 Volunteer of the Year. She has been an NEC volunteer for the last 15 years. She sidewalks every Monday and Saturday, mentors new NEC volunteers, is a key contributor to every NEC special event and serves on both the Barn Dance Committee and the DebPT Teen Scholarship Committee.

Haven was honored with the 2014 Bootstrap Boogie Barn Dance Award for her efforts to ensure a successful event for the last nine years, since the first Barn Dance in 2005. Lea is an NEC instructor but donates more than 250 hours each year to plan and prepare for the Barn Dance.

Five-, 10- and 15-year service awards also were presented to George Wasmer and Sue Lottridge (15 years); Kyler Bittner, Carol Muller, Linda Detzel, Wayne Learn, Jennifer Gerali, Stacie Buck, Pat Kurzenberger, Mary Lou Wilson, Hans Muller, Frank Headley, Paula Bowes, Wendy Tait, and Carol Headley (10 years); Nancy Mores, Caitlin Weber, Burt Eisenberg, Liz Griffin, Ed Jones, Patrycia Rochnowsha, Samantha Peter, and Leigh Morris (5 years).

Established in 1995, Naples Equestrian Challenge, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with the mission to improve the lives of children and adults with special needs through therapeutic riding and other equine-related programs.

For more information, visit [NaplesEquestrianChallenge.org](http://NaplesEquestrianChallenge.org).

## LSF opens three refugee resettlement offices

Lutheran Services Florida, a nonprofit human services organization based in Tampa, announced the opening of three main offices in Naples, Fort Myers and Sarasota to expand its refugee resettlement services program. The program assists eligible refugees with employment, legal services, application for permanent residency, adult education, childcare, youth services and more.

According to the Department of Children and Families, more than 140,000 eligible refugees, entrants, asylees, parolees, and Certified Victims of Human Trafficking arrived to Florida in the past five years. The new refugee resettlement office locations were selected based on the cities where refugee services were needed the most.

Previously, LSF's Refugee Resettlement program offered services in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Orange and Miami-Dade counties, but had no main offices. The expansion program is funded by a grant from DCF and will assist in making LSF's services more centralized and efficient.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must provide document proof of immigration status and have been in the country for less than five years. For information on services or how to apply, visit [lsfnet.org](http://lsfnet.org).

## Partnership for Philanthropic Planning to discuss volunteerism

The Partnership for Philanthropic Planning of Lee County will present "Volunteerism" at the Thursday meeting. Ken O'Donnell, executive vice president and market president of Busey Bank, Fort Myers, will share his personal insights and research regarding volunteerism and what motivates Americans to be viewed as one of the most generous societies on the globe. Attendees will hear about the benefits of volunteerism from an individual, business and societal perspective and review recent trends and statistics regarding volunteerism.

The meeting will be held at Blue Coyote Business & Social Club, 9854 Caloosa Yacht and Racquet Club Drive, Fort Myers from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Networking begins at 11:30 a.m., lunch and program begin at noon. The event is free to members. The cost for non-members is \$25 and includes lunch.

The reservation deadline is March 23; to RSVP go to [ppplee.org](http://ppplee.org).

### **DasHuh/DasHim Apparel kicks off fundraising campaign**

DasHuh/DasHim Apparel has kicked-off a crowd-funding campaign on the website [Indiegogo.com](http://Indiegogo.com) and is asking the local community for donations. The campaign will close on April 4 and the goal is to raise \$17,000. The funds will be used to cover costs associated with vending at trade shows, acquiring inventory and travel expenses. The link to the fundraising website is [indiegogo.com/projects/empowering-our-youths-financial-futures-2](http://indiegogo.com/projects/empowering-our-youths-financial-futures-2).

DasHuh/DasHim Apparel was launched in 2014 by Shannon Graham, a Fort Myers resident and graduate of Florida State University and North Fort Myers High School.

Graham is also the coach/director of DasHuh Basketball Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)3 girls (middle-high school) traveling basketball organization. One of the main purposes of the clothing line is to assist with funding the non-profit thus covering the travel expenses of all the players, college application fees, college tours, provide scholarships to eligible kids within and outside the organization to assist with food/utilities while in college, and provide startup funds to kids who wants to develop their own entrepreneurial skills.

For information, visit [dashuh.com](http://dashuh.com).

### **30 Lee County students receive scholarship**

Take Stock in Children is a statewide scholarship program for at-risk students that provides an opportunity for deserving students from low-income homes to escape the cycle of poverty through education. The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools is the local administrator of the program. We offer our students college scholarships, caring volunteer mentors and hope for a better life. When these students are accepted into our program, they sign a contract to maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA; stay crime- and drug-free; and meet with their mentor regularly. When they graduate from high school, having kept this commitment, they are guaranteed a four-year tuition scholarship to college.

Students may apply in sixth grade or ninth grades. The applications are reviewed by our Take Stock in Children Selection Committee and ranked, based on several criteria. Students were notified at their schools and recognized by their teachers, administration, and peers.

This year, The Foundation was able to partner with The Boston Red Sox for the middle school surprises. Wally, the team mascot, joined Foundation staff members in surprising the five new recipients in their classrooms. He also stayed to take pictures and meet and greet the other students in the classes.

The 30 New Scholars for 2014-15 are: Lydia Sanchez-Bruland of Bonita Springs Middle; Takhiya Carter and Meagan Hetherington of Caloosa Middle; Lakheria Hines of Cape Coral High; Marcus Pierre of Cypress Lake High; Cameron Dietter of Dunbar High; Karinna Chalusant, Annie Leon and Jennifer Oxier of East Lee County High; Clarice Cenac, Aileen Gomez, Ronald Lopez, Vanessa Sandoval and Michelle Taylor of Estero High; Adriana Amaris, Jerica Bornelus, Ayanna Harvin, and Alianna Ortiz of Fort Myers High; Christina Presmy of Ida S. Baker High; Shayra Delgrado, Rahkeem Jacques, Breana Vega and Tasya Wallace of Lehigh Senior High; Kaylee Proulx of Mariner Middle; Gabrielle Foy of Mariner High; Angela Amaro, Timothy Brett, Isabella Montoya-Bedoya and Avie Montoya-Bedoya of North Fort Myers High; Kayla Cruz of South Fort Myers High; and Jovani Ocampo of Varsity Lakes Middle.

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