

EDUCATION

CONNECTION

October 2015

Charlotte Local Education Foundation

Upcoming Events

* **Florida Gulf Coast University Tour**
Sat., Oct. 17
Parents & Mentors welcome to join TSIC Students, RSVP:
941.255.7500 x297

* **Harbor Nissan's War On the Peace**
Sat., Oct. 31
Beginning at 9 a.m.
Location: Laishley Park in Punta Gorda



Harbor Nissan's War on the Peace

The Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce and the Charlotte Harbor Yacht Club Harbor Dragons, a local dragon boat club, have partnered with the Charlotte Local Education Foundation (CLEF) to bring Harbor Nissan's WAR ON THE PEACE Dragon Boat Festival, Saturday, Oct. 31 beginning at 9 a.m. at Laishley Park in Punta Gorda. Proceeds from this event help to benefit Take Stock in Children scholarships for students in need.

Dragon boats are the basis of the team paddling sport of dragon boat racing, a water sport which has its roots in an ancient folk ritual of contending villagers, which has been held for over 2000 years throughout southern China. Dragon Boat racing has surged in popularity in the U.S. in recent years. They have become a fun community event and many major cities host dragon boat races each year.

The deadline to register a boat in the race is Oct. 26. For more information, or to register a team, [click here](#). Student and adult volunteers are needed to assist with this event. Please contact the CLEF office if you would like to volunteer, 941.255.7500 x294.





A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The change in seasons always marks the time for new beginnings . . . new friends, new projects, and new adventures. My 'new season' as Executive Director of the Charlotte Local Education Foundation allows me to collaborate with the Charlotte County community of dedicated parents, volunteers, business leaders, teachers and staff. Our common goal is to ensure we are preparing Charlotte County students to excel in our rapidly changing world.

Fall Projects

With no time to waste, CLEF is off and running this fall with Harbor Nissan's War on the Peace Dragon Boat competition coming up on Sat., Oct. 31. Our selections of new TSIC scholars is underway and we are looking ahead to our Teacher and Support Employee of the Year Celebration on Thu., Jan. 14. We held a Mentor Roundtable at *Jack's on Marion* in late September. We are always looking for new mentors to join our team.

Your support for our efforts to **engage** students, **enhance** core curriculum and **energize** CCPS staff is greatly appreciated. Whether volunteering your time, donating to our Teacher Supply Depot or attending our War on the Peace event, you are partnering with CLEF to provide resources for educational innovations and enhancements to lead our students to success. I look forward to an exciting and fulfilling year at CLEF as we work together to provide exceptional learning experiences for all students in Charlotte County Schools.

Sharon McNeal
CLEF Executive Director



CLEF Awarded \$41,000 Grant

Focusing on Career/Technical Education, Literacy, and STEM Education the Take Stock in Children Career Exploration CFEF Matching Grant was awarded to the Charlotte Local Education Foundation in late September.

This \$41,000 matching grant will enhance the Charlotte County TSIC program and strengthen student's skills to succeed in the world beyond high school.

The goals include:

- Expanding the opportunity for TSIC 8th and 9th graders to explore technical/career choices by providing college campus tours and engaging with career professionals in various occupations.
 - Increase academic performance by providing selected TSIC 8th graders and current TSIC 9th graders with laptop computers and computer literacy training.
 - Increase student knowledge of educational and career opportunities in the STEM field.
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Mentor Spotlight

Take Stock in Children (TSIC) dueling mentors, husband & wife, Sue and Bob Sifrit, have been CLEF mentors for four years. Here is an inside look at how they work together to help make TSIC students succeed.

CLEF — You two have a kind of “tag team” approach to working with your TSIC student. How does this approach work?

Sifrit — The “tag team” approach works really well for us. Sometimes only one of us is available, other times we both are able to meet with our mentee, Jared. He receives the benefit of both a male and female perspective to solving issues or to help guide him in reaching his goals.

CLEF — Why did you both decide to become mentors?

Sifrit — (Sue) When I retired from serving on the CCPS School Board, some friends made donations to CLEF for a scholarship in my name. Then proceeds from a 5K were added to complete the scholarship. When Jared was selected for “my” scholarship, I was asked if I would like to be his mentor. Bob and I thought it would be good for Jared to have a male role model as well, so we both agreed to work as a double mentor with Jared. It has worked out wonderfully for all of us.

CLEF — What advice can you give to others who might be considering becoming a mentor?

Sifrit — Be Proactive! Thinking ahead to what may be an issue or concern, what the student needs to have accomplished by the end of the term or school year helps them plan, and organization. One of the things we have helped Jared with is time management. Many of the students don’t understand the consequences of some of their decisions. If they can be encouraged to think ahead, organize their time well, understand what a great opportunity they have with the Take Stock in Children scholarship program, then they will

**Sue & Bob Sifrit,
TSIC mentors
since 2011**



realize they can achieve their dreams, even with a bump or two in the road. An awareness of the student’s needs and the CLEF resources is also important. Jared didn’t have a computer, but CLEF was able to get a laptop donated for him through a program at the Cultural Center.

CLEF — Anything else you would like for potential mentors to know?

Sifrit — Mentoring has been an interesting, challenging experience for both of us. It has been exciting to see Jared grow academically and socially. He is on track through dual enrollment at the Tech Center to get certification in the Automotive program, and earn his high school diploma so that he can be prepared for success in college and life.

About 25% of high school freshmen fail to graduate from high school on time.

I’m here to change that.

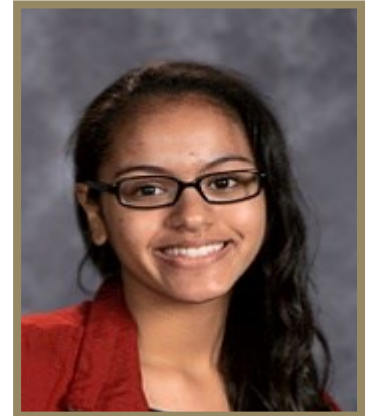
**Become a Charlotte Local
Education Foundation Mentor
Today!**



Take Stock in Children Spotlight

Omehvy Rivera

Omehvy Rivera is a 9th grader at Florida Southwestern Collegiate High School who has her vision set on accomplishing a career in the mental health area. She is also a member of the Charlotte High School swim team.



CLEF — Why are you interested in competing in swimming?

Omehvy — Even before I began high school, I have always been interested in joining a swim team. There was just something about the sport that drew my interest more than others. I love the excitement of the competition. You are not only competing against other swimmers, you are also competing against your personal best. My favorite event is freestyle because I love it when I'm swimming free. It just feels exhilarating.

CLEF — Do you participate in other sports?

Omehvy — No, swimming takes a lot of practice time, both in the morning and at night. It's hard work, but I know it will pay off in the end.

CLEF — What is your favorite subject in school?

Omehvy — I love biology. It is fascinating to me to know that every living thing has a function and how everything just kind of connects to each other.

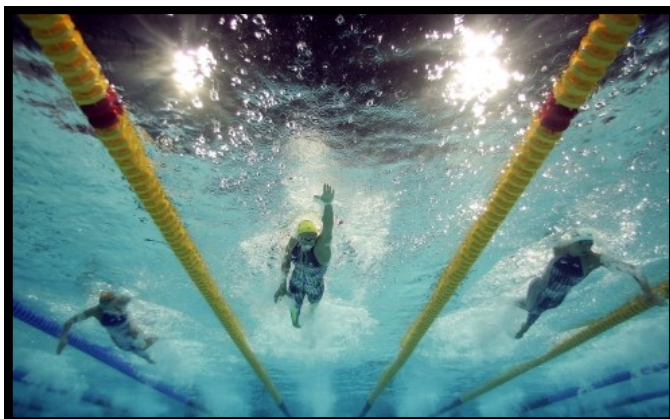
If you would like to watch Omehvy and the rest of the Charlotte High School Swim Team compete, the October schedule is:

Tue., Oct. 6 — County Championships, South County
Regional Pool, 5 p.m.

Sat., Oct. 10 — Tri-County Championships, Sarasota, 9 a.m.

Sat., Oct. 17 — Charlotte High School, 10 a.m.

Thu., Oct. 29 — Districts, South County, 1 p.m.





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Choosing a college to attend can be a very tasking and challenging procedure to undergo. By visiting some of Florida's college choices, our students will gain a better idea of what the college's have to offer and what college life is all about on campus so that the student may be able to make the right choice for themselves and their future.

Students without access to technology are now at an academic disadvantage. Research shows that many low-income students get lost in the "digital divide." Without computer access, research and information required for college courses is limited after they graduate from high school.

With a low percentage of high school seniors being proficient in mathematics and interested in STEM careers, coupled with the need for students to fill jobs in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, our exploration of STEM careers will help to spark the interest of students in these much needed career fields.

Project Take Stock in Children Career Exploration begins in December and continues through to early May 2016. The total grant amount of \$41,000+ was provided through CLEF community partners (\$20,694) with the state matching (\$20,694) dollar-for-dollar. Thank you CLEF community partners.



CFEF Grant Awarded to CCPS for Reading Program

The Consortium of Florida Education Foundations (CLEF is a member) has awarded Charlotte County Public Schools a state matching grant for \$20,000 to help break the cycle of generational poverty at Peace River Elementary through a grade-level reading program. This project seeks to target low-performing second graders with deficiencies in learning and literacy. Peace River Elementary families will be invited to participate in the education process as a way to communicate the importance of good reading skills necessary to move onto third grade. Family involvement is a key element in this outside of the school day project.



Parents are included in this project as they are the child's first teacher and important role model. Support for families will include books and technology to support reading at home, plus family involvement in learning through arts integrated projects.

CFEF provided \$10,000 of the grant from state funds, while the other matching \$10,000 came from the Sarasota Community Foundation.



Sponsorship Opportunities for You

2016 Teacher & Support Employee of the Year

Make plans now to join us for the 2016 Teacher & Support Employee of the Year Celebration on **Thursday, Jan. 14** at Murdock Baptist Church. It will be a time of celebration as we announce this year's winners. Nominations are open now. [Click here](#) to submit your online nominations.



Sponsorship opportunities are available for this community wide event. Please contact Sharon McNeal to partner with CLEF on this event that directly benefits students: P: 941.255.7500 x294, E: sharon.mcneal@yourcharlotteschools.net

Gifts That Honor Your Legacy

Looking for a way to make an impact on the generations of tomorrow? Why not establish a planned educational gift that creates a personal touch with a lasting impact on the lives of our students today and tomorrow.

Bequests

Bequests are gifts to CLEF designated in your will that are simple, flexible and versatile. You can specify anything from money to a prized possession to a percentage of your estate. Bequests are also entitled to an estate tax charitable deduction for their full value.

Beneficiary Designations

Naming CLEF as the recipient of your assets, IRAs and retirement plans, or life insurance or insurance annuities allows you to support CLEF and often leave your heirs with many tax advantages. Life insurance policies are a low-cost way to leave a large gift by naming CLEF as the beneficiary.

Endowed Gifts

Endowments are gifts that are a permanent pool of support for CLEF programs, because the funds are invested by professionals on behalf of CLEF to support our programs for many lifetimes to come. Cash, securities or other assets can be used to create your endowment.

Florida License Plate

For every Florida License for Learning plate sold to a vehicle owner in Charlotte County, \$20 of the purchase goes directly to CLEF. That means proceeds from the plates registered here will stay right here in our community to help public school students.



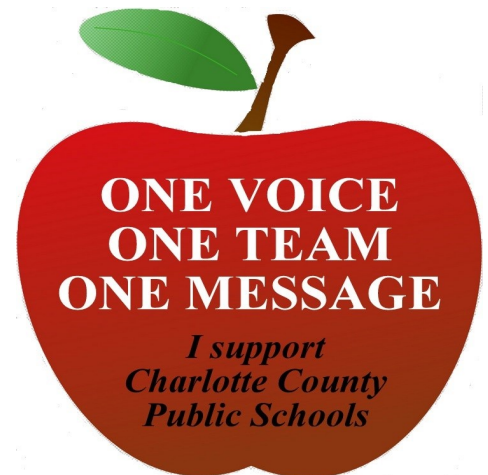


CAR MAGNET'S FOR SALE

Please purchase your car magnet to support Charlotte County Public Schools. Cost is \$10 per magnet. All proceeds will be used to benefit CCPS students. You may purchase them at the Harbor Nissan War on the Peace Dragon Boat competition on Sat., Oct. 31 or contact the CLEF office:

P: 941.255.7500 x294,

E: sharon.mcneal@yourcharlotteschools.net.



AWARD OF EXCELLENCE for CLEF

CLEF staff members accepted an Award of Excellence Gold Level from Take Stock in Children at the annual TSIC College & Career Summit in Tampa last month. This award honors education foundations who have met or exceeded the state requirements for the Take Stock in Children program.

Photo (L to R) — CLEF Staff — Michelle O'Connor, Program Assistant, Sharon McNeal, Executive Director, Jane Merriam, College Success Coach.



Back to School Nights Sponsor

A BIG "Thank You" to Centennial Bank for providing hotdogs and soda at our annual Back to School Nights for our Take Stock in Children students and their mentors. Our community partners help make the Charlotte Local Education Foundation's work a success for students and the Charlotte County community.

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