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FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN



A PARENTS GUIDE TO GAMING!

THE PASSIONATE PRESIDENT...



INSIDE: WIN TWO BRADENTON MARAUDERS SEASON TICKETS!



(Left to Right) Sandy Law - Chair, 2019 Gala "For the Love of Children", Kris Gause - Club Treasurer, Bea Moran - Club Recording Secretary, Nora Partenheim, Debbie Iaboni - Club VP, Marianne Barnebey, Barbara Ludwig - Co-chair, 2019 Gala, Krista Bloomberg - Club President

For The Love Of Children

After nearly a century, Service Club of Manatee County continues to change young lives

WORDS: Amy Bell

PICTURES: Whitney Patton

Since 1927, a very special group of women has been hard at work transforming the lives of Manatee County children. Service Club of Manatee County, a nonprofit organization, is a united group of women who share a common goal: To raise and distribute funding for the support and well-being of

local children who are in need of food, shelter, clothing, health services, and education. After nearly a century of generosity, this organization is still on a mission to change children's lives. Today, the Service Club includes 40 active members and more than 100 sustaining members.



A Long History of Giving

In the late 1920s, Manatee County was a small community struggling through the Florida Depression, which hit a couple of years before the Great Depression. At the time, Ballard Primary School was the one and only elementary school in Bradenton. A group of Manatee County women noticed many children coming to school without lunches. These concerned ladies banded together to make sandwiches and bake cookies, which they delivered confidentially to the school for those children. Thus, the Service Club of Manatee County was born.

When the school lunch program became part of the Manatee County school system in the 1940s, these determined women turned their focus to providing lunch money, clothes, and shoes for needy children in the community. The Service Club started organizing fundraising activities, from bridge parties, luncheons, and teas to golf tournaments, fashion shows, and rummage sales.

After World War II, the federal government assumed responsibility for the school lunch program. Even so, the Service Club still felt compelled to help local children. This is when they decided to assist youngsters at Children's Haven (now called The Haven), a local center for developmentally disabled children.

In the following years, the Club saw a dire need for healthcare for disadvantaged children. Local dentists and physicians agreed to provide dental care and eyeglasses and even tonsillectomies for underprivileged children—all thanks to the Service Club of Manatee County.

Over the past nine decades, the Club has continued to grow right along with Manatee County. The group has come a long way since it was first founded in 1927, but their mission still remains the same: to change the lives of the community's children.

"The Club has a long and well-respected history of working to provide focused support to local agencies whose work directly impacts the lives of the children of Manatee County," says Janet Schmoll, Chair, Guest Experience for Service Club of Manatee County. "We offer our creativity, many hours of work, and ultimately our hearts for the love of children."





In 2018 alone, the Service Club distributed \$116,000 to 31 organizations across the county, including Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County, The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Foundation for Dreams, Inc., Manatee Children's Services, Pace Center for Girls, Turning Points and Young Life - just to name a few. "Each organization completed an extensive application and was visited by one or two Service Club members who learned more about each charity," explains Schmoll. "This information was then shared at a Grants Committee meeting where a final determination of the grants was made."

Krista Bloomberg, current president of the Service Club of Manatee County, reflects on the long, passionate history of the organization. "In 1927, it all began with a vision: to serve local underprivileged children," she says. "Our founding members set out to change children's lives by providing lunches for local children in need. Sadly, today this indigence extends far beyond lunches." Today, 21 percent of Manatee County children under the age of 18 are living in poverty.

"Assisting me in achieving our goal are 39 amazing women," Bloomberg adds. "Each one has a specific objective, and each brings a diversity of thought, talent, and passion to our Club. I am extremely proud of our Service Club Active and Sustaining Members who continue to strengthen this legacy and honor those women who served before us."

For the Love of Children: **Elegant Gala for a Great Cause**

For the past 53 years, Service Club of Manatee County has held an annual Charity Antiques Show, which has been the chief source of funds for the organization's grants. Now named *For the Love of Children Gala*, this fundraising event has evolved into an elegant evening gala, featuring catered food and drink and a one-of-a-kind silent auction.

This year, *For the Love of Children* will be held on Saturday, March 9, 2019, at the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Bradenton. This sophisticated celebration will showcase delicious dishes from Pier 22, an open bar, a six-piece band, dancing, a live auction, a wine raffle, and a silent auction with an array of unique offerings up for bid. Tickets cost \$100 per person and seating will be limited to 325 people. Purchase tickets online at ManateeServiceClub.com or email manateeserviceclub@gmail.com.

"Once again, all money raised through this event will be donated to groups responding to the needs of Manatee County children," emphasizes Schmoll. "We hope you will join us in support of the local children's charities of Manatee County by purchasing tickets to our Charity Gala, visiting our Hidden Treasure's Booth located at the Manatee Performing Arts Center, making a donation, or becoming a corporate sponsor."

"In addition to the funds raised at the gala, the Service Club also receives grants from several community organizations who support our mission and our process of distributing these funds to children," Schmoll explains. "Many businesses and individuals also contribute in the form of sponsorships which range from \$500 to \$10,000. The Service Club is grateful to these donors and the trust they place in our process to fund organizations that benefit the county's children, from birth to 18 years of age."

Bloomberg says the Service Club of Manatee County could not survive and thrive without the generous support of local donors. "I am honored to lead and work with such an amazing team, but nothing we do would be possible without a strong community supporting our mission," Bloomberg adds. "Thank you for your continued support!" 🙌

• For more information or to purchase tickets to the *For the Love of Children* charity gala, visit ManateeServiceClub.com.