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INSIDER

GIVING BACK

From Saddles to STEM Kits

Neapolitan nonprofits rallied to respond to the crush of needs created by COVID-19 and continue to be both creative and caring as the community moves forward. The League Club, for example, gave \$16,500 to the Naples Therapeutic Riding Center, which provides riding lessons and equine-facilitated group services for children and adults with physical, social, and mental needs. The grant will provide scholarships as well as overall support for the center, which lost revenue after programming was suspended.

Although the gift originally was earmarked for riding lessons, The League Club, which has awarded virus-related grants totaling more than \$400,000 to 44 area nonprofits, made an exception. "Nearly all of our region's nonprofits are experiencing disruptions to their programs and projects caused by the pandemic," says League Club President Gigi Stewart. "Making these funds unrestricted in use is the best way we can help the organizations that our members voted to support, and we're proud to be flexible enough to address this need."



COURTESY OF NAPLES ILLUSTRATED THE NAPLES THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER



FAR LEFT: LOURDES ARAUJO SUPPORTS THE NAPLES THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER. LEFT: A CHILD RECEIVES A STEM-BASED LEARNING TOY.

The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation and the Naples Children & Education Foundation, meanwhile, partnered to help groups that serve young people by distributing at-home STEM kits and fitness packages. More than 650 students received items to help them focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and about 200 pieces of fitness equipment were donated as well. "During this very challenging time, it's important to provide kids with ways in which they can continue to learn and stay active, and hopefully what we're doing is taking a small step in that direction," says Baseball Hall of Fame member Cal Ripken Jr., who co-created the foundation to honor his father's legacy.

Groups that benefited include the Boys & Girls Club of Collier County's Bolch & Nichols Campus; Gargiulo Education Center; Grace Place for Children and Families; NCEF's Out-of-School Time Initiative; and Valerie's House. —L.G.

NEW & NOW

THROWING SHADE: FPL Solar Canopies in Naples



FPL'S SOLAR NOW CANOPIES HARNESS ENERGY AT NORTH COLLIER REGIONAL PARK (ABOVE AND FAR RIGHT) AND AT THE NAPLES ZOO AT CARIBBEAN GARDENS (RIGHT).



Those giant parking structures at the Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens and North Collier Regional Park are shady business, to be sure, but they're also doing much more than helping to keep your car cool. They're generating energy. "People love solar, but most never get the opportunity to see what it looks like," says Matt Valle, vice president of devel-

opment for Florida Power & Light Company (FPL). "That's because solar panels are typically out of sight at our 28 large solar energy centers located in rural areas. By integrating solar technology in urban settings, we're inspiring millions of people to familiarize themselves with the renewable energy source that is playing a big role in how we power our state."

The two local high-visibility locations are among numerous Collier County sites participating in FPL's voluntary Solar-Now program. Adds zoo spokesperson Courtney Jolly Gaff, "The canopy serves as a teaching tool for all ages in our community—from teaching children the basics of converting sunshine to energy, to educating adults on the increasing need to conserve resources." (fpl.com) —L.G.