

2025 Report to the Community from Your Community Foundation for Charlotte County

The Charlotte Community Foundation (CCF) has a new mission, new leadership, and new approaches to strengthen our role as the dedicated community foundation to serve all of Charlotte County!

CCF actively builds endowment—permanent community capital—to meet our county’s current and future needs and opportunities. Our endowment is like a savings account for Charlotte County; we invest donors’ contributions, spending the interest as grants and scholarships, now and forever!

A Record Year for Grants & Scholarships



- \$260,000 Awarded in Scholarships
- 65 Students
- Half are working adults (out of H.S. 2+ years)
- Pursuing trade certificates to graduate degrees
- Half Million \$ awarded in two grant cycles, spring and fall
- Competitive process with new approaches
- Recognition of volunteer-led vs. staff-led nonprofits
- County-wide representation in grantees and reviewers alike



Endowments On the Rise: “Charlotte Forever” Debuts

Endowments are funds where the principal is invested, with the interest earnings distributed annually as grants and scholarships. They provide for predictable, reliable funding.



The pooled aspect of community foundations means individual contributions are magnified—and endowments now start at \$5,000: “Charlotte Forever” funds to support our competitive grantmaking. An original board member Hasan Hammami championed this new option and challenged others to follow his example.

CCF in the Community

From sponsoring the STEM Pavilion at the FL Air Show, to sharing time with veterans and their families, service clubs, colleges, chambers and cultural institutions, CCF was on the move across Charlotte County in 2025.



Retooled Competitive Programs for Charlotte County

From competitive programs alone in 2025, a half million dollars was distributed across Charlotte County! Decisions on competitive grants and scholarships are made by volunteer committees of local community members, with the support of staff and Board of Directors oversight. In a new staffing structure, we now have a seasoned educator serving as a part-time Scholarship Coordinator (Carolyn Gorton) and another nonprofit professional (Whitney Stout, Grants Manager) focused full-time on grantmaking and working with local nonprofits.

In 2025, we also built new committees chaired by CCF Board Members: a scholarship committee chaired by seasoned educator Deelynn Bennett and a grants committee chaired by longtime resident and nonprofit champion JoAnn Tompkins. The dozens of community members on these new committees (*see the back page for the rosters*) come from areas across Charlotte County, and many were brand new to engaging with CCF.

Our grants committee prioritized service across Charlotte County and for the spring cycle, funding across all sectors (e.g., arts & culture, environment, etc.). Unrestricted grants are funded by community members supporting Charlotte County’s nonprofit sector through pooled named endowments (starting at \$5k) and gifts to CCF’s Community Impact Fund (aka our “Charlotte Forever” Fund).

2025 Spring Cycle Grantees (Unrestricted Funds)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wintergarden Food Pantry at Wintergarden Presbyterian Church Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic Valerie’s House United Way of Charlotte County Punta Gorda Historical Society Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society Pregnancy Solutions Peace River Wildlife Center Peace River Community Housing Partners (PORCH) Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens Military Heritage Museum Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County Girls on the Run of SWFL Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida Gilstad Literacy Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Florida Philharmonic Florida International Air Show EPIC Community Resource Center Environmental Conservancy of North Port & Surrounding Areas Englewood Community Coalition Drug Free Charlotte County Do the Right Thing of Charlotte County Charlotte HIV/AIDS People Support (CHAPS) Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition Charlotte Chorale Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (C.A.R.E.) Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast |
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2025 Fall Cycle Grantees (Donor Designated Funds)

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>VETERANS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -JFCS of the Suncoast -Military Heritage Museum <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SENIORS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Harry Chapin Food Bank of SWFL -Neuro Challenge Foundation <p style="text-align: center;"><u>YOUTH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast -Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County -Charlotte Harbor Youth Sailing -Crossroads Hope Academy -Englewood Community Coalition -FFA-Charlotte High School -Gilstad Literacy Foundation -Girls on the Run of SWFL -Valerie’s House | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>HOUSING INSECURITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity -On The Spot Aid -Peace River Community Housing Partners (PORCH) <p style="text-align: center;"><u>HEALTH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Awaken Outreach Center -BackPack Kidz -Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition -Englewood Community Care Clinic -Wintergarden Presbyterian Church |
|--|---|

The Spring 2026 Grants Cycle opened with an in-person information session (and two Zooms) and a “coffee klatch” to thank nonprofits for all they do for Charlotte County. With the response from donors to our new “Charlotte Forever” funds, our grant funding will double from Spring 2025 to Spring 2026!



SCHOLARSHIPS

Our scholarship program now provides **more than a quarter-million dollars** in support annually! Scholarships are for all levels of post-secondary training & education—from trades certificates to graduate programs.



In 2025, **65 students** received awards, equally split between **working adults** (out of high school at least two years) and **graduating seniors**. Twenty years after the CCF Board created a fund to honor its co-founder Leo Wotitzky with key support by another leader, Vernon Peeples, this general scholarship now has enhanced impact as **The CCF Scholarship Fund: Supporting Future Leaders for Charlotte County like Leo Wotitzky**. A single, simplified on-line scholarship application helps qualify students for any potential CCF funds and includes an essay question about how students will give back to Charlotte County.

CCF IS NOW AT THE STRONGEST POINT IN OUR HISTORY AT \$29M IN ASSETS!

Thank you to a diverse array of supporters for believing in the Charlotte Community Foundation (CCF) and responding to changes we've made in our leadership and programs to enhance our service as the dedicated community foundation for all of Charlotte County.

CCF is now at the strongest point in our history since becoming a community foundation in 2004, with \$29M in assets. This growth comes from two sources: investment management and an increase in new assets under management.

In 2025, we changed our investment manager to one focused on endowment management and with extensive foundation clientele: CAPTRUST. We intentionally chose *a firm outside the region* to avoid any conflict of interest or favoritism.

We've also grown as **donors have responded to our new emphasis on endowment** and offering the option to create a **permanent, named fund to forever benefit Charlotte County and support our competitive grantmaking, starting at just \$5,000.**

Since 2024 when we introduced this change, **CCF has established a record number of endowments**—permanent funds to benefit our community through grants and scholarships (31 in the last two years, with 19 of those as “Charlotte Forever” funds). These new endowments have been **established by more living donors than ever in CCF's history.**

Endowments allow for predictable, ongoing support in perpetuity, and these lasting permanent funds provide a contribution to our community long-term, with dedicated dollars to address evolving community needs!

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE:
CHARLOTTECF.ORG.**

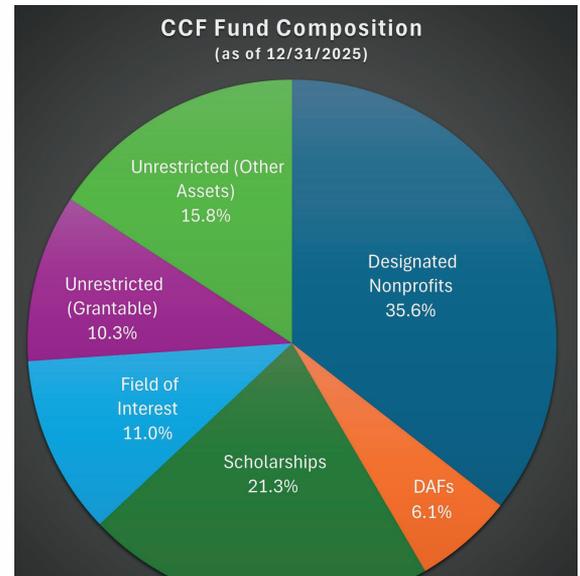
A Message from Our Leadership



Jill McCrory, Esq.
Chair, Board of Directors



Dr. Shelley Strickland
President & CEO



LAW SUIT A HAZING NIGHTMARE



One powerful example of looking to CCF for our endowment management expertise is the new **Stand Up, Speak Up Sawyer Updike Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Read about this powerful response to help combat hazing on our website.

You can also read the story behind a significant endowment established in 2024 that made possible many grants in Fall 2025's competitive grants cycle, the **Mary V. Renois Fund for Veterans, Youth & Seniors**.

Board of Directors

Board members are selected for their strong ties to the community and their local knowledge of the needs of Charlotte County and its residents.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Jill McCrory, Esq., Chair | Deelynn Bennett |
| Dr. Robert Peterson, Vice Chair | Debra Cooper |
| JoAnn Tompkins, Secretary | Reppard Gordon |
| Kim Savasuk, CPA, Treasurer | Mark Odell |
| | Terry Wright |

Our new professional team all live in Charlotte County and are passionate about serving this community.

- Dr. Shelley Strickland, Chief Executive Officer
 Suzanne Herron, CPA, Chief Financial Officer
 Carolyn Gorton, Scholarship Coordinator
 Whitney Stout, Grants Manager
 Lee Ann Gunning, Gifts & Records Coordinator
 Angela Brown, Office Coordinator
 Eugene O'Brien, Property Manager



THANK YOU TO OUR OTHER VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM ACROSS CHARLOTTE COUNTY:



CHARLOTTE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
2025 GRANTS COMMITTEE
 Members in **bold** served both Spring & Fall

JOANN TOMPKINS
Committee Chair

Priya Ahluwalia
 Joan Alleckson
 Theresa Brackett
 Della Booth
 Claudia Bruce
 Kelly Carr

Rev. Jim Cochran
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 Donna FitzGerald
 Carol Geiger
 Marianne Lilly
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Suzanne Stancati
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 Judi Wilson
 Doug Wynn



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*Joiner & Savasuk CPAs
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Law Office of Jeffrey Briscoe

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Terry Wright
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SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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 Barbara Davis
 Barbara McCauley
 Chrisanna Wright
 Crystal Smith
 Fran Holleran
 Herb Bennett
 Dr. Jackie Greene
 Jeanie Sifrit-Reed
 Jeanne Marquez
 Lee Ann Gunning
 Mary Jo Holleran
 Melodie Brunett
 Michael Barnes
 Pam Schlundt
 Patricia Smith-Kizilay
 Rosalie Mack

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE
 AND TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST:
CHARLOTTECF.ORG**

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Connect with us on Social Media:

