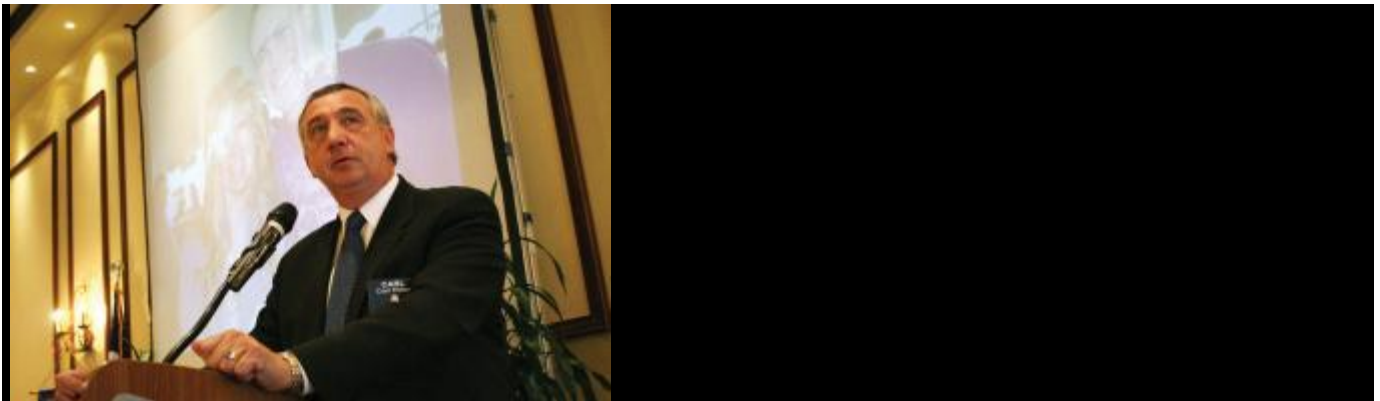


[Rotary giving tops \\$1 million](#)

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by: Michael Eng | Managing Editor



Cancer Support Community Florida Suncoast CEO Carl Ritter spoke on behalf of his organization.

LAKEWOOD RANCH — When single mother Juanita Graham looked out from the podium April 5, at The Polo Grill and Bar’s Fête Ballroom, she didn’t just see a roomful of faces staring back at her.

She saw superheroes.

After all, the crowd included more than 70 members of the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch, the group that presented a \$5,000 grant to Manatee Glens, which has been instrumental in helping Graham’s two children, Bobbie and Jon-Earle.

Both Bobbie and Jon-Earle were diagnosed early with several mental disorders, including ADHD and bipolar disorder. However, through Manatee Glens, both of Graham’s children have been able to receive treatment to help with the diagnoses, and Jon-Earle is even in the process of being mainstreamed into a regular classroom setting.

“I don’t really know where our family would be without Manatee Glens,” Graham told the crowd. “I am so very appreciative of what the Rotary Club has given in the long run for my children.”

Manatee Glens was just one of 33 local and international non-profit organizations that received grants from the Rotary Club during the club’s special luncheon. In total, the club donated more than \$100,000, all of which was raised through its 2011 Suncoast Food & Wine Fest.

The latest grants bring the 11-year-old club’s giving total to more than \$1 million.

This year, the club received more than 70 grant applications. Ways and Means Committee Chairwoman Jennifer Grondahl and committee members Rotary Club President John Freeman, Ladd Waldo, Mark Dahle, Laurie Hagberg, Gina Jordan, Denise Pope, Ted Lindenberg and Greg Mellors then whittled those down to 33.

The annual luncheon was a chance for all Rotarians to see how their work on the wine festival benefits the community at large.

“This is the time the members get to hear stories of inspiration from our grant award recipients,” Freeman said. “We get to see how we’re really affecting the local community.”

Chartered in April 2001, the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch comprised 27 members. Its first event, a pancake breakfast, raised \$2,500 to donate to local charities.

The 2012 Suncoast Food & Wine Fest will be held Nov. 10, at the Sarasota Polo Club.

To learn more about the Food & Wine Fest and the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch, visit www.lakewoodranch-rotary.org.

Contact Michael Eng at meng@yourobservers.com.

2011 Grant Recipients

Adopt-A-Village in Guatemala Inc.: **\$1,250**
Boys & Girls Clubs Sarasota County: **\$2,500**
Child Protection Center Inc.: **\$5,000**
Children First Inc.: **\$1,500**
Easter Seals Southwest Florida: **\$6,400**
Family Network on Disabilities of Manatee/Sarasota Inc.: **\$3,000**
Family Partnership Center of Manatee County Inc.: **\$5,000**
Feeding Empty Little Tummies Inc.: **\$1,785**
Foundation for Dreams: **\$8,000**
Harvest Methodist Pack-A-Sack: **\$2,400**
Instride Therapy Inc.: **\$1,500**
Manasota Buds Inc.: **\$1,350**
Manasota Lighthouse for the Blind Inc.: **\$3,000**
Manatee Elks, Elks feeding Empty Little Tummies: **\$1,500**
Manatee Glens: **\$5,000**
Manatee Technical Institute — East Campus **\$3,165**
Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee Inc.: **\$2,000**
Mothers Helping Mothers: **\$2,500**
Orange Ridge Bullock Elementary School: **\$2,500**
Rotary Camp Florida: **\$1,850**
Rotary International Clean Water Project: **\$10,000**
Rotary Gift of Life Florida Inc. **\$2,500**
ShelterBox USA: **\$1,000**
Southwest Florida Honor Flight Inc.: **\$2,000**
Teen Court of Sarasota Inc.: **\$3,000**
The Children’s Guardian Fund Inc.: **\$3,500**
The Wellness Community-Southwest Florida Cancer Support: **\$5,000**
Tidwell Hospice Inc.: **\$5,000**
United Way 2-1-1 of Manatee County: **\$1,800**
We Care Manatee: **\$5,000**