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Habitat Students Given a Chance for a Bright Future

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Guest Columnist

NAPLES, Florida – Christ Child Society of Naples Florida

celebrated its 20th anniversary

on November 14, 2017 by

announcing its

largest single

gift to the children

of Collier County. It will

be known as

The Christ

Child Society

of Naples Habitat

Scholars Fund

and be managed by

The Community Foundation

of Collier County to motivate high

school students living in Habitat

Communities to continue their

education beyond high school. Students

competing for the awards will

be eligible for renewable scholarships

(up to \$5,000 annually) to attend

accredited four-year colleges,

community colleges, trade schools,

and apprenticeships.

The \$350,000 scholarship is significant

because it is more than twice

the annual budget of this local

women's philanthropic group.

In 1997, a small group of dynamic

women decided there was much

more to do in Naples than play

golf, bridge and tennis. They set

out to fulfill the unmet needs of

the underserved children of Collier

County. They formalized their

intention by creating Christ Child

Society of Naples, a multidenomina-

tional organization associated with

The National Christ Child Society

in Washington, DC. Twenty years

later their local outreach has logged

tens of thousands of hours

of volunteer time, do-

nated hundreds of

thousands of dol-

lars of financial

resources, and

has engaged

innumerable

others: mem-

bers, friends

and other phil-

anthropic groups

in their mission

to improve infant

care, provide basic needs

and promote literacy. Christ Child

Society of Naples has partnered

with more than 30 local charities

and schools throughout its history.

In 2015, it reorganized to be more

efficient and effective in using its

resources by concentrating its ef-

forts in three critical areas: **Infant**

Care (by creating and distributing

layettes); **Basic Needs** (partnering

with Habitat for Humanity, Grace

Place and Children's Advocacy

Center); and **Literacy** (Christ Child

weekly volunteers are supporting

the development of literacy skills

in 20 Collier County schools, Fun

Time Academy and other early

childhood locations.)

Any noted authority on philan-

thropic organizations would tell

you that this group should never

have reached its 20th anniversary.

It has no office, no executive direc-

tor, and no street address. Its main

fundraiser is every other year and

must generate enough to sustain a

two year operating budget.

Christ Child Society of Naples is

more than its accumulated acts

of kindness. It thrives because its

members share a tremendous sense

of loyalty to each other and to the

children of Collier County. These

women ages 35 to 95 are dedicated

and visionary. They don't hesitate

to embrace their successes and are

not afraid of changing their organi-

zation to meet the needs of today's

underprivileged children.

During this time of thanks and giv-

ing, I invite you to join this small

but powerful group of women who

make up the Christ Child Society

of Naples. Help us fulfill any one

of the many unmet needs of our

children by volunteering your time

and talents, or by giving to the

Christ Child Society of Naples and

our Habitat Scholars Fund.

Bill Barnett, Mayor of Naples, pro-

claimed November 14, 2017 Christ

Child Society of Naples Day.

For more information: (www.christchildnaples.org)

The criteria for selection and all other details

related to the scholarship fund can

be found on The Community Founda-

tion of Collier County website:

www.cfcollier.org

Kathleen Flynn Fox is a past co-

president of Christ Child Society

of Naples, and chaired the 20th

Anniversary Gift Committee.

