

Ocean Reef Grants \$48,000 For Upper Keys Youth Coaches

The Ocean Reef Community Foundation has granted the Florida Keys Children's Shelter \$48,000 to help fund a Recreation Coach, Life Skills Coach, and Education Coach, all three employed full-time at the 19-bed Youth Center in Plantation Key.

"Our strategic plan created by our Executive Council and productivity expert Elisa Levy in 2017 called for employing staff with bachelor's degrees and specific expertise to provide a more quality experience for the youth ages 11-17 who live here," said Florida Keys Children's Shelter CEO Ben Kemmer. "Whether a young person stays with us for just a few nights or for months, the coaches make a difference."

"We're thankful for the



(L-R) Florida Keys Children's Shelter Residential Coordinator Christi Shortes, Ocean Reef Community Foundation board member Amy Upjohn, Children's Shelter board members Jay Rourke, Linda Falk, Brad Copeland, Michele Rodriguez and Nikki Bussard; Children's Shelter CEO Ben Kemmer, Development Officer Jennifer McComb, and Life Skills Coach Kirk Steputis, Ocean Reef Community Foundation grants committee chair Janie Sims, and Children's Shelter Education Coach Ursula Cervone. Photo by Carol Ellis.

Ocean Reef dollars that are helping fund the gap between government grants and the salaries needed to attract and retain skilled professionals," Kemmer said. "Our cost of living is higher than other areas receiving the same funding as we do. And here in

the Keys we're competing with tourism. You can make more money working in a restaurant or retail store than the wage that the state budgets for us to pay youth support staff," he said.

The Ocean Reef Community Foundation also granted

nearly \$4,000 for Florida Keys Children's Shelter residents to participate in educational field trips this summer, organized by Reef Environmental Education Foundation.

The grant to the Children's Shelter was among the largest of the more than \$1.3 million distributed by Ocean Reef Community Foundation to dozens of nonprofit organizations. Other programs in the Upper Keys receiving the largest grants this year included the Guidance/Care Center, Habitat for Humanity of the Upper Keys, Take Stock in Children, Key Largo YMCA, Key Largo School, and Florida Keys Community College. For a full list of programs funded, visit the Foundation's web site at orfound.org

Destination	How to Get There
Georgia	Midnight Train
Clarksville	Last Train
Heaven	Stairway
Hell	Highway
Hotel California	Dark Desert Highway
Kansas City	Train, Plane, or Walk
Scotland	High Road or Low Road
Carolina	In Your Mind
Paradise	With Two Tickets
The Sea	Fly Like An Eagle
Central Station	High on Cocaine
Gulf of Mexico	Straight Down the Mississippi River
Over the Line	One Toke
Home Tonight	10 Forward Gears & a Georgia Overdrive
Sea of Green	Yellow Submarine
Round the Mountain	Six White Horses
Honalee	A Boat With Billowed Sail



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