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GENEROSITY

THE CAFE OF LIFE INC.

SPRING 2025

Marietta Bala, Board Chairwomen: Generosity

Dear Friends,

The Café of Life exist and is successful due to our generous donors and volunteers. God calls us to remember those who are hungry and in need and you have heard the call. The sharing gift of your time, dedication and passion makes a difference to vulnerable families in need. It ensures that children get the food they need to help them learn and grow; to have a healthy life. Your generosity helps us reach out to the community to fulfill more basic needs. We have resources to enrich lives of children with music and educational programs and women have classes with skills that help them and their families. We provide financial assistance to help make ends meet during a crisis. We can assist young people with scholarships to reach a goal of a higher education. Clients are grateful for your kindness. It inspires them to pay it forward to do good deeds for others and many help us with our services.

“Generosity is the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly” – Matthew 10:8. Someone sharing generosity is happy to give time, money, food and kindness to people in need. True giving from the heart is an expression of love. The love and care you are inspired to share are from God. He is at the heart of your giving.



“By being generous a person prospers and will be benefited.” – Proverbs 11:17. “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and He will repay him for his deed”- Proverbs 19:17.

Thank you for your generosity and for all that you do for the less fortunate.

We are grateful.

Marietta Bala, Chairperson
Board of Directors, Café of Life

“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”
Hebrews 6:10

PAVILION

We have a “kid’s table” during our daily meal service for crafts and educational activities, however, space to accommodate the table became more and more of a challenge as our take-home pantry donations and client count continued to grow. To solve this, we constructed a small pavilion thanks to the “generosity” of Lowe’s Home Improvement who provided the funding, painted and landscaped our beautiful new “kid’s pavilion”.

Café of Life Contact Information

Café of Life, Inc.
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Bonita Springs, FL 34136

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WEB: cafeoflife.org

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The Café of Life is a faith-based organization believing in the teaching of all great religions that one must love and assist one’s neighbor in time of need. The Café is not affiliated with any particular religion or denomination. Our mission is to provide basic human needs to the very poor and hungry people of the Bonita Springs area in a manner that preserves the dignity of the client in a respectful environment and to enrich and empower people to be all that they can be.

The Café of Life, Inc. is a registered 501(C)(3) tax exempt organization. Your gifts to the Café are tax-deductable to the full extent permitted by law.



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PARTNERSHIP – BIKES FOR TYKES

The Café has an exciting new partnership with the non-profit Bikes for Tykes of Naples who is providing new children and adult bikes. Adult bikes are in real demand as many of our clients do not have reliable transportation and a bike is their way to get to work. The 50 kids’ bikes they donated for Christmas were a very big hit.



GENEROSITY – VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

Those of us fortunate enough to work for the Café of Life experience true “generosity” every day as the passionate volunteers so generously give of their time and talents. Additionally, we have the pleasure of working with volunteers who display a “contagious” positive attitude that impacts everyone around them. We could not complete our mission without the hundreds of volunteers who, in 2024, donated well in excess of 25,000 hours in support of the Café of Life.

ISN'T THAT INCREDIBLE!! But, the “generosity” the Café experiences goes well beyond our wonderful volunteers, for our financial donors are amazing too, our donations come from churches, communities and individuals. Did you know that the Café does not, and never has, accepted any public funds? We raise all funds locally and spend them locally and we do it without having any fundraising specific events.

ISN'T THAT INCREDIBLE!! The Café staff and volunteers do not have to expend resources “fundraising”, but rather can concentrate on the



mission of helping others. Many thanks to our fantastic volunteers and donors!! We appreciate our donors so much that those who contribute \$500 or more receive a personal note from our chairperson.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

To thank our dedicated and compassionate volunteers for their extreme “generosity” we hosted a Volunteer Appreciation reception which was very well attended. And, as we do each year, we distributed “volunteer

appreciation” gifts throughout the month of February. These are small tokens (coffee mug, chocolates and thank you card) of the immense appreciation we have for our wonderful volunteers.



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VOLUNTEER PROFILE - GEORGE



Everyone who has spent any time helping with our daily meal service knows volunteer extraordinaire George who is a staple at the Park. For years, George has given generously of his time and talents in many facets of our operations, from food serving, picking up at Farmer Mike's U-Pick and Fresh Market, assisting cooking teams and most recently helping us transition to an iPad volunteer sign in. George had a career serving his nation in the U.S. Air Force and in retirement goes way above and beyond to serve the less fortunate. George is the epitome of “generosity” and our hero!

CLIENT STORY - CECI

Ceci was in need of medical services for a hearing problem but the family was without insurance so they reached out to the Café of Life. Ceci was born hearing impaired in both ears and her hearing had worsened. Her doctor prescribed hearing aids but the expense was well beyond their means. The Café reached out to Lee Health Group and submitted an application for financial

assistance which was approved. Ceci's mother wrote “Thank God, they helped her. My family and I can't thank you enough for the assistance the Café of Life and doctors at Lee Health provided to my daughter. She received her hearing aids. Her quality of life has changed for the better and forever. Thank you very much! May God bless you all at the Café of Life”.



“About 5 years ago, I started to attend the support groups at the Café of Life. Since that moment, the Café of Life has become a big support, not only for me but for my entire family. They empowered me, I learned that in order for me to achieve my goals I should be educated and trained. I started getting English classes and was able to break the language barrier in my life. I also received counseling (arranged by the Café), in a moment when I needed it most. I learned how to sew which allows me to generate an extra income for my family. I have been learning how to take care of my health and keep myself and my family healthy. I am now able to

CLIENT STORY - MARIA

break unhealthy eating habits, I am cooking healthy meals. I have also been exposed to great and practical teachings about women's health. The Café of Life has gone above and beyond on my case, they walked me through the entire process of getting my U.S. Citizenship. They helped financially to cover the filing fees. I am so grateful for the wonderful people at the Café of Life for helping me in achieving my dreams and to be a better mom and wife. I can only look back and see the different type of life I am living now, and I cannot thank the Café of Life enough for all they have been, and continue doing, not only for me, but for whoever wants to better him/herself.” Maria



THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS

The Café continued its tradition of celebrating the holidays in style and we are so appreciative of all the support we receive which enables each to be so special. Thanksgiving included the Copperleaf community providing 500+ elaborate meals which were distributed at four low-income locations, 100+ prepare-at-home family meals provided by Estero Church and special meals, prepared by volunteers from the Copperleaf community,

for our senior clients. Christmas sponsors provided over 2,500 presents, 50 infant gifts from First Presbyterian Church, and numerous families were sponsored with gifts, mostly from a Florida Gulf Coast University group. The Lee County Sheriff's Office was instrumental in our main gift distribution event, which also included the Bonita Springs mayor and several other city officials.