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## **SOCCER TEAM**

Many of our children were interested in learning/playing soccer but to join a local league requires the ability to travel to away games, something parents could not accommodate. So, Yadi found a coach (Manny) and an assistant (Colleen) who got the program up and running with instruction two days a week at our Park with support (jerseys, balls, etc) from the Café. The number of children participating just continues to grow. The pizza provided following practice is a highlight.



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## **Café of Life Contact Information**

**Café of Life, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 367794**  
**Bonita Springs, FL 34136**

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WEB: [cafeoflife.org](http://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-deductible to the full extent permitted by law.







**CARING... SHARING... SERVING**

# SERVING

**THE CAFE OF LIFE INC.**

**FALL 2025**

## **Marietta Bala, Board Chairwomen: Serving**

Dear Friends,

When I feel resigned to accepting the state of the world as it is, I feel discouraged at the thought of others suffering, of going without, or living in fear and chaos. I may not be able to help everyone in the world or our community, but I can still be of service wherever I am. Scriptures says in 1 Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace". Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." God teaches us to be generous and serve others, and by doing so we are serving Him.

This is the calling of everyone who serves at the Café of Life, whether it's as a volunteer, donor, or staff member. We don't need special skills to be of service, just have willing hands and an open heart that channels God's love to be directed wherever we are needed most. We serve by helping to end poverty by providing a daily hot meal, groceries and take-home food for the weekend. We serve health needs by providing hygiene, medical and dental care. Classes educate women in healthy living, sewing and gardening skills. Children are provided music lessons, sports activities, swim lessons, and summer camp experiences. These services provide enrichment, new skills and self-esteem.



Scholarships are provided to worthy students to advance their education. Financial assistance is provided to those struggling to pay rent and utilities.

Our mission is to serve the less fortunate in our community, but change does not come from the mission statement but from dedicated people who live the mission every day. An organization is only as powerful as the hearts that drive it and the hands that serve it. We serve with joy and purpose, grateful to help.

Thank you to all of you who serve. You are a blessing to us.

*Marietta Bala, Chairperson  
Board of Directors, Café of Life.*

## **ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

Due to the excellent support the Café receives from the community, we have continued to add programs to better serve our clients. With this growth came additional space requirements. Consequently, we rented some "flex space" along Old 41 Highway which will function as a donation and processing center for clothing and household goods. It will provide considerable warehousing capacity as well. This location is open 9am to noon Monday – Friday for donations. Come check it out!



9201 Cockleshell Court, Unit 5 (on Old 41 Road)



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE – KATHY

Kathy has volunteered with the Café for six years and the past two have included one-on-one tutoring in speaking, reading, writing and comprehension of English skills with Hispanic clients. She has helped one client obtain her US citizenship and is currently tutoring four. It was when she began volunteering at the Café that her desire to resurrect the four years of high school Spanish occurred as she wanted to be able to communicate with clients. As a regular volunteer she now has the opportunity to speak Spanish almost daily. Kathy commented that “my students all desire to better their lives through learning, whether the motivation is to gain citizenship, get a better job, help children with homework or simply communicate better in public. Each lesson brings me



Kathy (back right) with three students and Outreach Coordinator Lety

satisfaction and joy. I feel truly blessed to volunteer at the Café and I look forward to continuing to expand the ways I can support learners on their journey. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of something so impactful”.

## FOOD VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS

The service local food vendors provide to our clients to help with their grocery expense is truly a blessing, as you can see from these pictures. The Café is so grateful to **Fresh Market, Farmer Mike's U-Pick and Publix** for their frequent generous donations. IT'S A WONDERFUL SERVICE THESE VENDORS ARE PROVIDING!



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL



Our annual Back-to-School event included the distribution of backpacks, school supplies & uniforms to nearly 350 children, along with 17 bikes and 300 ice cream cones. In addition, we provided eye screening, school physicals, haircuts and bike safety information. We thank our supporters: West Bay Charitable Foundation, the Vasari community, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Lions Eye Clinic, Premier Mobile Health Services, Bonita Estero Rail Trail, Bikes for Tykes, the Palmira community and many volunteers.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

The Café of Life offers scholarships to aspiring deserving students who desire to continue their education. Several met recently to discuss their goals and dreams. Jessica who is finishing nursing school this semester at FSU hopes to work in the ICU and eventually get a doctorate in anesthesia. Enrique is a junior at FGCU majoring in biology/ chemistry with a goal to become a medical doctor. Emilio, a sophomore at FGCU majoring in bioengineering plans to work in the medical/bioengineering industry. Rodrigo a student at FSU is pursuing a goal in mechanical and motorsports engineering. Starting students at FSW are Belen, who has a nursing major, Alicia, is studying paralegal and plans to go to law school to focus on personal injury law. Anthony, a social and human services major, is pursuing a career working with non-profits due to his desire to help others and give back to the community.

All of them expressed their gratitude in comments as: "Having the help from the Café of Life has changed my life dearly and has removed a massive amount of stress on my family. Thank you so much for everything. I would not be at this point without you." "I have been able to attend college without having to work and can focus on my education." Thank

you, Cafe for helping me out by paying for my college and buying supplies and computer. God bless you for being such a blessing." "I am honestly grateful that I am in this position to focus on school and continue my education. This is truly a blessing and I am super thankful for each and everyone that has supported and contributed to me." "I am so thankful and blessed that the Café of Life has granted me this opportunity to chase my dreams and receive a higher education."

We wish all of these students great success. This is truly a wonderful service.



## PARTNERSHIP – BONITA SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL

The Café's relationship with the school has been a long one as they have generously sponsored food drives and raised funds on our behalf, as well as, provided produce from their garden. Now it's our turn to expand the partnership by servicing an unmet need with the creation of a "Resource Center" for their low-income students. The Resource Center will include school supplies, uniforms, shoes, underwear, water bottles, snacks and more for the school to distribute as needs arrive. United Way provides similar resources to the Public schools.



## SUMMER CAMP SPONSORSHIPS

The Café sponsored 11 children for the YMCA eight-week summer camp, 25 children for swim lessons at the public pool, 12 children for Arts-Bonita summer programs and 16 for First Presbyterian Church Vacation Bible Study camp. Camps offered life experiences few low-income children have the opportunity to experience.

