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## Foundation Grants Money To Nonprofits

By LOIS KINDLE

The Tampa Tribune

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**SUN CITY CENTER** - At its April meeting, the board of the Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center made several South Shore nonprofit organizations happy.

"We're so pleased," said paleontologist Frank Garcia, curator of the Camp Bayou's Paleo Preserve, as he heard the news the foundation was donating \$10,000. "Paleontology is the Rodney Dangerfield of science, so it's really difficult to raise money. I'm excited the foundation supports what we are doing here to educate kids."

Garcia said the money will be used to educate the public about the world's oldest ice age discovery at the Leisey Shell Pit in Ruskin.

"We're going to dedicate a former school portable the school district gave us and name it the Leisey-Casey Center after Bud Leisey and Bill Casey," Garcia said. Leisey gave Garcia permission in 1983 to dig for fossils at the shell pit he owned, which resulted in what Garcia calls "the most important early ice age fossil find on the planet."

Casey owned and operated the Caloosa Shell Corp. He managed the Caloosa Shell Pit and allowed Garcia to bring more than 40,000 children to the property to fossil hunt.

The center will display many fossils, photographs and memorabilia from the various digs.

"It will be a real little showplace," Garcia said. "The winners in all of this are the children. Thanks to the community foundation, we'll be able to get the information out and do it in the right way."

Wimauma Elementary School was also a beneficiary of the April meeting. It received a \$3,000 grant.

The foundation gave the school's chess club a \$6,000 grant in 2007 to help cover tournament fees and travel expenses for the student members. Normally the foundation doesn't repeat grants, but when the school made a second request this year, the board decided to consider it.

The chess program "is such a neat idea and with what Principal Roy Moral is doing with those kids, the board felt we could make an exception," said Evelyn Lunsford, foundation chairwoman. "But we only gave them half of what they asked for."

Moral said he's grateful for the exception.

"For the 2007-08 school year, it cost \$12,000 to cover expenses for the chess program," he said. Thanks to the Greater Sun City Center Community Foundation, Hillsborough Education Foundation, Ruskin Junior Woman's Club and Allstate Construction, we were able to cover the full amount."

Forty students are in the program.

"Chess teaches students if you work hard enough and want something bad enough, you can accomplish anything," Moral said. "Our kids are determined. We just won the 2008 State Championship for elementary schools in the K-5 division."

Wimauma Elementary received a second grant for \$4,000 to purchase Elmo visual presenters, which have high-resolution document cameras to project small text, pictures or 3-D objects for the class to see. The images are captured by these cameras and transmitted to a monitor, computer or LCD projector. The school asked for one Elmo for each of eight first-grade classrooms and LCD projectors.

The Hillsborough Education Foundation committed to match the foundation's grant.

Lunsford said the foundation also awarded three other grants to organizations serving South Shore residents. The Alzheimer's Association Gulf Coast Chapter received \$3,390 to bring its Memory Mobile to Sun City Center; the ALS Association Florida Chapter got \$10,000 to provide respite care services, and the Voices for Children Foundation benefiting Guardian ad Litem received \$10,000 to provide services to abused, neglected or abandoned area children.

"In the past, we'd see two to three grant requests per month," Lunsford said. "Now we're getting as many as nine as we're seeing the effects of state and county budget cuts."

## LEARN MORE

**WHAT:** The Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that administers more than 50 endowments or trusts.

**WHERE:** 1525 Rickenbacker Drive, Sun City Center

**ESTABLISHED:** 1992

**FUNDING SOURCES:** Individuals and nonprofit agencies

**ASSETS:** \$30.2 million

**EXPENSES:** Less than 1 percent

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Evelyn Lunsford, chairwoman; Robert H. Mohr, chairman emeritus; Joan Audsley; Charlotte Clark; Raymond Donoghue; Sally Erath, Jim Johnson; Frank Koebrich; Judy Kramer; Luther R. Lloyd; Archibald S. McKee Sr.; Arlene Oakley; and Roxann Seeley

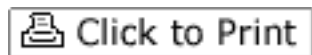
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