

"Life is God's gift to us. What we do with it is our gift to God."

Rev. A.R. Bernard



News & Updates

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Making a Difference

For many local families the luxury of summer vacations and pool memberships are not only out of reach; they are unthinkable. The primary concern of these families is to have a few dollars to prepare their children for the upcoming school year.



Families with school-age children can spend hundreds of dollars for school supplies. That includes the cost of backpacks, notebooks, paper, erasers, pens and pencils. The school-supply cost, especially when you add in shoes and clothing can severely hinder a struggling family.

Thanks to Bradenton Kiwanis's *Christmas in August* program, 500 homeless students and their families who are registered with Manatee County Schools Project Heart will receive school supplies, medical, dental, hearing and vision exams along with gift cards to purchase clothing and shoes.

Without support from programs like *Christmas in August*, children living in poverty are more likely to miss school, drop out and fail to earn a high school diploma.

Many thanks to our *Christmas in August* sponsors, partners, volunteers and leadership for making an incredible difference in the lives of 500 students and their families.

Photo courtesy of Johnson Photolmaging. Over 80 Community Partners such as Manatee Technical College provide support to students and their families.

Elaine Graham New Shinn Society Member



Elaine Graham is our newest Shinn Leadership Society member. Elaine's kindness, generosity and dedication to improving our community especially in helping young people is an inspiration to all. She has our most sincere appreciation for continuing the Kiwanis mission.

Elaine is a strong believer in helping young people succeed. She understands that programs like *Christmas in August* make a meaningful difference to students and families in need. Elaine states, "The reason I support *Christmas in August* is the belief that every child deserves to begin school with the tools for success. As a retired educator who worked in education for 30 years, I observed students who did not want to be different. Not having the supplies for school is a stigma we can mitigate. I have always felt the importance of the "Power of One" as shown in the Story of the Starfish. The message is that what we do matters for the ones we help."

"I donated to honor Karen Carpenter and Dr. Steve Tinsworth for the work they do for children through *Christmas in August* and Take Stock in Children Manatee. Christmas in August levels the playing field for so many students. Donating toward school readiness helps students feel better and so do I."

Elaine Graham
Retired Educator

Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation Board of Directors approved the naming of the Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation Leadership Giving Society after Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation founding member and past Kiwanis Club President, Jack Shinn (1922-1997). Jack was a highly decorated World War II Army Captain who endured 18 months of heavy combat in Europe. He was a local bank leader who served on numerous Kiwanis and community projects and committees. The Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation Jack Shinn Leadership Society recognizes annual contributions of \$1,000 or more or cumulative contributions that total \$1,000 or more annually made to the Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation. Contributor names are listed in all Shinn Society communications.

Photo courtesy of Ms. Graham.

Happy to Support

Tara Bergstrom-Merino is one of the leaders of the Lakewood Ranch Student Advocacy Group. One of the Groups focus areas is to support needy students. Tara heard about Kiwanis's *Christmas in August* program with it's emphasis on homeless students and need for school supplies and decided to help. All of us at Kiwanis appreciate their support.

"Lakewood Ranch Student Advocacy was thrilled to bring the Lakewood Ranch community

together to support Christmas in August. We want to help all students fulfill their academic potential and we are proud to be a part of ensuring our underserved youth start the school year with these basic supplies."

*Tara Bergstrom-Merino
Lakewood Ranch Student
Advocacy*

Photo Courtesy of Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation. Tara Bergstrom-Merino and her daughter Natalie.



Final Preparations

Christmas in August Co-Chair, Linda Agresta along with several members of the *Christmas in August* Planning Committee "walked through" LECOM Park to complete a visual inspection for the positioning of school supplies, community partners and numerous services that will be offered to the 500 *Christmas in August* participants. Linda states that "this is our final chance to see first hand exactly where everything will be placed prior to the day of the program. A great deal of preparation, time and effort has already gone into creating our one-day program to support our Project Heart students."



Photo Courtesy of Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation. L-R Nick Long, LECOM Park Operations Coordinator, Mac Aldrich, Linda Agresta, Co-Chair, Ray Schaberg, Jane Kocher and Larry Smith.

Thank You Bradenton Marauders

A heart-felt thanks to the Bradenton Marauders/Pirates organization for making a generous donation of Marauders game tickets for our *Christmas in August* students and their families. The students will have a wonderful experience enjoying the game and cheering on the Marauders.

Photo Courtesy of Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation.



Thank You for Making a Difference!

Roland Emerton, CFRE | Bradenton Kiwanis Foundation | 941-779-8786
Roland.Emerton@Yahoo.Com www.bradentonkf.org

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