

BRIDGES OF LIGHT FOUNDATION

Our 2019 Year-End Review



ABOUT US



Since 2004, the Bridges of Light Foundation has been supporting at-risk Central Florida youth and their families. Over the years we have developed a variety of impactful programs centered around nurturing, mentoring, and educating our community. As the foundation grows, we are able to aide and create lasting impressions on an ever-growing number of children in our area.

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



3,560
Meals provided to individuals in our Adopt-A-Family Program



Holiday gifts for at-risk youth in BOL programs.

2,348
Units of service provided in our Adopt-A-Family program

610
Students at Carver Middle that participated in our Incentive Program

237
Total attendees at the Players Ball

153
Thanksgiving baskets donated and delivered

over
\$200,000
Raised by our generous donors

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019 was another successful year for the Bridges of Light Foundation! As I celebrate my third full year with the greatest nonprofit in Central Florida, I have been able to reflect on the substantial growth of the organization since I started this journey. As I think back to the past year and each and every person who truly makes BOL such a unique organization, I am filled with optimism and joy for the future. This report will showcase how our programs continue to make a difference in the lives of our students and their families. You will read about the end of a Bridges of Light Foundation staple event, The Players Ball, our new 2020 fundraisers, the generosity of our community, and the outstanding impact of our Foundation. It is filled with pages of excitement and pictures of success stories which would not be possible without my amazing team, board members, volunteers, and community partners. I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your unwavering support and commitment to the vision over the past year. You are all AWESOME and I'm extremely proud to be the person entrusted to bring the Bridges of Light Foundation to new heights in 2020.

Looking forward to building more BRIDGES!!!

Ray Gaines
Executive Director

OUR EVENTS

The Bridges of Light Foundation has been hosting the Players Ball Gala since 2005. Throughout the course of these sixteen years, you have helped us raise a tremendous amount of funds. However, as many of you are aware, this year's gala will also be our last. As an organization, we would like to spearhead a movement that sees nonprofits distance themselves from their elegant, costly galas and focus the additional time and money back into their community. We will certainly miss getting together with some of our favorite supporters, dressing up, and raising funds to aide us in our mission; however, we feel sure that the support we have received at the Players Ball will carry on throughout 2020.

In the new year, we will be hosting quarterly fundraising events. Currently, the BOL team is planning a Yogathon in February and an Awareness Luncheon in April.



OUR HOLIDAYS



WINTER HOLIDAYS

In order to spread holiday magic, BOL provided gifts for each child in our Middle School Program and in our Adopt-A-Family Program. On top of providing wishlist gifts, we had a special holiday party at the Rosen Centre for the youth at GOV. Stuffed stockings, food, and laughs were had by all!

THANKSGIVING BIRTHDAYS

This Thanksgiving was one for the books! We were able to launch a new drive and were blown away by the support of our community. Due to the overwhelming generosity, we were able to provide 153 families with a full Thanksgiving meal. In addition to that, we were also able to partner with four new organizations and schools in our area.

2019 was a year for celebration! Bridges of Light had two birthday initiatives in place to make sure all children in our programs had a birthday to remember. For children in our Carver Classroom, we provided 'Birthdays in a Bag,' thanks to Horizon West's Hope Club. These bags contained all supplies for an at-home birthday celebration. We also made sure to deliver cakes, presents, and a little extra love to each member of our Adopt-A-Family Program on their special day.



INSIDE CARVER'S HALLS



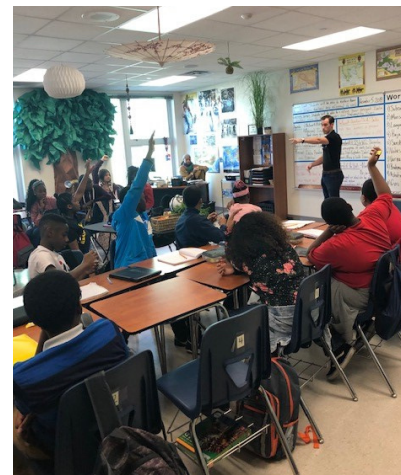
INCENTIVES

2019 saw the launch of a detailed, regular incentive calendar for all students at Carver Middle School. We have recognized and rewarded students who achieved high FSA scores and gains, those who excelled on their quarterly PMA's, students with perfect attendance, quarterly honor rolls and more! Since the inception of the program, Bridges of Light has seen an average increase by 6% in English test scores and by 11% in Math.

To recognize these accomplishments, BOL has provided ice cream parties, field days, cook-outs, freeze pops and certificates! We are proud to sponsor a growing and impactful incentive program. As an added bonus, our team gets to see more faces and hear more stories from students at Carver Middle School.

OUR CLASSROOM

Currently, Bridges of Light heads into a classroom of 22 sixth graders biweekly to explore leadership, teamwork, and career or trade opportunities. Guest speakers are often times brought in to discuss a variety of topics. Thus far, some of our favorite conversations have been goal setting and kid-friendly financials. We can't wait to continue through the school year with our class!



CLOSET OF CARE



This year our Closet of Care saw many visitors - both those who were shopping and those donating. Currently, families in need are welcome to come to the Closet for items, free of charge, between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm. We offer a range of supplies, including gently used clothing, shoes, toys, home good items, blankets, furniture, and school supplies.. We were also able to add an additional food component in 2019 that will allow us to assist our families during tough times. We are hoping to continue to grow the closet, its visitors, and our methods and metrics in the upcoming year.

ADOPT – A – FAMILY

OUR PROGRAM

In 2019, we revamped our Adopt-A-Family program, adding a new component. In addition to the financial piece, the Foundation now offers case management and supportive individual and family counseling to address each family's unique struggles. This consisted of therapeutic family activities, visits with the kids at school, meetings with teachers, financial literacy discussions, apartment hunting, and providing weekly groceries, to name a few. Most importantly, the program has been about building strong relationships with each family and being there for them in their time of need. Throughout the year, we have seen more financial stability, increased grades, better self-esteem, and stronger family relationships.



One of our favorite 2019 success stories is about Linda, a strong 65-year old woman who has custody of her five grandchildren. When they first came to Bridges of Light, they had been living in a tiny, run-down 2-bedroom house, with three kids in one bedroom and two kids in another. Linda often struggled to make ends meet and was behind on all of her bills. Now, the family is living in a spacious 3-bedroom apartment that we were able to furnish entirely through donations from our supporters! With a little assistance from one of our partners, Servant's Heart Ministry, Linda is always able to have food on the table for the kids. Seeing the progress that this family has made since we started working with them is a great reminder of why we do the things we do.

GREAT OAKS VILLAGE



TUTORING

This year in our Educational Tutoring Program, we were able to bring in 5 Certified Teachers as paid tutors Monday through Thursday stationed at GOV's Learning Center. Here, each resident attends tutoring weekly in order to improve their grades, base knowledge and overall confidence in their academics. This year we have seen several students obtain GED's, pass tests, and grow both in and outside of the classroom.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

At Bridges of Light, we are honored to work hand in hand with GOV - a local foster care facility. One of our favorite sponsorships is the annual summer program. This year, we hosted a 6-week program focused on sharpening math and reading skills to avoid the 'summer time slide.'

The residents were also able to participate in art, physical education, and weekly field trips. By the end of the program, participants displayed a 7% increase in their desire to attend college, over a 10% increase in perceived respect towards adults, and a 7% increase in their relationships with their peers.



WHAT'S AHEAD

FUNDRAISING

In the upcoming year, BOL will be launching TWO new fundraising initiatives! The first is the revamp of our current Bridge Builder Alliance. To join the Bridge Builder Alliance, a donor pledges to give \$10,000 each year for 10 years. With this gift, the donor receives perks and access to exclusive events and committees.

Our second initiative is the E.M.M.I.E Giving Society. This giving program will allow individuals to donate yearly at different values starting at \$100 and growing to \$1,000. Each stage will come with a set of perks and allow more individuals to give, resulting in more awareness for the Foundation.



EVENTS

In order to keep all of our wonderful supporters engaged and provide new and unique opportunities for them, we have decided to host 4 different events this year. One event will be held each quarter. As of now, we are hosting a Yogathon at the Dellagio on February 23rd from 9am-12pm. We are also holding an Awareness Luncheon on April 16th at a location and time that is yet to be determined. We are thrilled to be able to focus on new events and hope to see you all there! Please visit our website for more information.

SPONSORSHIPS

In addition to our fundraising initiatives, we will also be offering a variety of sponsorship opportunities. Sponsors will be able to support all of our events, incentives, students and aspects of all programs. Visit our website for additional details or reach out to a BOL staff member for any ideas, questions or thoughts!