



Naples Children & Education Foundation to Honor 25th Anniversary Naples Winter Wine Festival with Holistic Fund a Need Auction Lot - “Fund the Future”

Naples, FL (November 26, 2024) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF) today announced that its annual Fund a Need at the 2025 Naples Winter Wine Festival will pay homage to the past 25 years of accomplishments and fund all seven of its strategic initiatives, including Early Learning, Healthcare, Hunger, Mental Health, Oral Health, Out-of-School Time and Vision.

Every dollar raised for this special call to action auction lot named “Fund the Future” will go to support underprivileged children in Collier County with a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing of the whole child and support the continued success of their collective impact projects.

Founded by NCEF, the Naples Winter Wine Festival enters its 25th year and ranks as the most successful international charity wine auction in the world, raising almost \$302 million for local children’s causes. At the 2025 Festival, guests will have a chance to show their support through a live auction on Saturday, January 25th, while supporters across the country, including those who are unable to attend the Festival, will be able to participate in an online auction starting Friday, January 17th at 8 a.m. (EST) and running through Tuesday, January 28th at 5 p.m. (EST).

“This year’s Fund a Need will significantly impact the nourishment, healing and education of children in our community by aligning with NCEF’s holistic approach,” said Stephanie Pezeshkan, NCEF Honorary Trustee and 2025 Grant Committee Chair. “By addressing the multifaceted needs of these children, we will help provide comprehensive support systems that ensure their overall wellbeing.”

Each of NCEF’s collective impact models and initiatives provides the most fragile children with the tools they need to succeed academically and thrive by enhancing educational opportunities, supplementing feeding programs and offering essential vision, oral and mental health services.

“Contributions to “Fund the Future” will directly support NCEF’s seven Strategic Initiatives, which are designed to address the needs of the whole child,” said NCEF Chief Executive Officer Maria Jimenez-Lara. “By providing children with this comprehensive support, we can foster the growth of resilient, capable and productive adults who will contribute positively to their communities.”

Together, we can fill in the gaps and provide the essential resources that children in Collier County need to overcome the current realities they face. Here are some startling statistics:

- **75% of 4-year-olds** in Collier County are not participating in VPK programs
- **8.8% of Collier County Children** lack health insurance
- **65% of Collier County students** qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- **100% increase in the number of deaths by suicide** for Collier County youth aged 10-

- **80% of children** screened through the NCEF Pediatric Oral Health Initiative experienced tooth decay due to lack of treatment
- **39% increase in school dropouts** at CCPS between the 2017-18 and 2020-21 school year
- **1 in 4 children** has a vision problem

Every dollar raised will go to support NCEF's strategic initiatives to focus on the future of local children. For more information or to make a donation, please visit www.napleswinefestival.com.

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About Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival (NWWF), one of the world's most prestigious charity wine auctions, offers a weekend of unforgettable memories. Guests enjoy world-class food and wine during intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and other landmark settings throughout Naples and are invited to bid on once-in-a-lifetime travel and wine experiences during an electrifying live auction. Since its inaugural event in 2001, the NWWF has raised almost \$302 million, making a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in Collier County.

About Naples Children & Education Foundation

The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted close to 90 of the most effective nonprofits in the local community, providing 350,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time.

For additional information on the Naples Children & Education Foundation or the Naples Winter Wine Festival, contact Lisa Juliano at lisa@napleswinefestival.com or 239-514-2239.