

# VETERANS DAY



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## 'It's about those who are touched'

*Community Foundation pays tribute to those who serve*

By STEVE STEINER

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The sensation of admiration created an energy during this year's donor appreciation and grant award breakfast banquet held Nov. 3 at the Clermont City Center. For one of the speakers it was electrifying. Literally.

In his opening, Matt Manzari, challenged attendees to ask themselves a personal question.

"What is your story," he asked. He then asked whether any of them had ever been asked that question. He then elaborated. To Manzari, it wasn't a question of what you do, but a question of character. What are they doing for the betterment of others?

He came to this point in life when he related that as a professional athlete, an incident occurred in which he survived being electrocuted. A gasp permeated the room upon this revelation, which he deftly put people at ease.

"Yeah, it came to me as shock, too," he said. He broke the tension the revelation had caused with that comment. On a serious note, as a consequence, the incident potentially meant the end of his sports career, plus more than 70 operations for him to be at his current point in life; a point where he wouldn't now be had it not been for others.

In too many instances, he told the audience, the importance of living is in the present, but with a purpose outside themselves.

"Your story matters," he said. "It's a story of us, loving the community." He emphasized the importance of joining forces and for nonprofits to not see one another as competition. "We're here to partner with you."

Manzari closed by reiterating his opening.

"Who are you? And what's it going to say next," Manzari said.

### PRE- AND POST-PANDEMIC

Keynote speaker Dave Krepcho, president and CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank Orlando took up the ball from there, opening with the story of a 72-year-old widow with \$1.72 in her bank account. The retirement savings she and her now-deceased husband was gone, fighting the



STEVE STEINER/NEWS LEADER

Thanks to the Live Well Foundation, it has been made possible for the Community Foundation of South Lake to present several grants to six nonprofits. Accepting a grant in the amount of \$19,172 on behalf of the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County is Tameka Mays. By the expression on her face, she and the organization are excited having the financial gift.

disease that ultimately killed him. She, herself, was fighting cancer. The only money she had, outside the bank account, was \$600 per month from Social Security.

It was through the efforts of others and key nonprofits she has been assisted. In the instance of Second Harvest, Krepcho, emphasized that food means more than a meal.

"Food is the heart. Food is for the mind. Food is for the spirit. "Food is to feed those in need," said Krepcho. He pointed out the

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## A record-breaking year of giving

*Special to the News Leader*

On Nov. 3, the Community Foundation of South Lake County hosted a breakfast banquet for more than 130 donors, nonprofits, dignitaries and guests at the Clermont City Center, in which was celebrated a record-breaking year of giving nearly \$1.6 Million into the community from their endowment and their generous donors.

Along with celebrating the record-breaking year of giving, the 2021-2022 grants were awarded to the following organizations:

- LovExtension \$5,000
- Early Learning Coalition of Lake County \$19,172
- Family Matters of Central Florida \$20,000
- Building Blocks Ministries \$25,000

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