

Longboat Key Garden Club Grants – 2021-2022

The Garden Club is proud to announce that it gave out 9 grants in 2021-22 to the following organizations:

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens - \$5,000

The grant funds (\$2,880) will provide summer camp scholarships for 12 students in grades 1-5 who would not have the resources to attend camp. The first three weeks of camp (June 6 through June 17) are held at Selby's Downtown Sarasota campus, and the second three weeks of camp (June 20 through July 15) are held at the Historic Spanish Point campus. Each week is spent in the outdoors exploring new ecological themes through hands-on activities. The camp provides fun-filled, educational programming designed to instill a lifelong appreciation of nature.

The balance of the grant (\$2,120) will support Selby's partnership with Embracing Our Differences and the "Make-A-Day of It!" program. Embracing Our Differences is a nonprofit organization based in Sarasota, which uses the power of art and education to expand consciousness and celebrates the diversity of the human family. The grant funds will cover the cost to visit the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens as part of the Embracing Our Differences field trip to an annual art exhibit.

Mote Marine Laboratory - \$3,420

The grant funds will provide a scholarship for one week of summer camp for 6 middle school students, 11 to 13 years of age who do not have the resources to otherwise attend this camp. In addition, each camper will be provided with the supplies they need to participate. During their week at camp, scholarship recipients will be introduced to Mote's research while using the science tools and technologies that Mote scientists use in the lab and in the field. The students from these communities come often have limited field-based and lab-based STEM learning and are less likely to have access to visit museums or aquariums. Many have never engaged in marine science activities in the water. Throughout the week, campers will enjoy special tours of Mote Aquarium and Marine Mammal Center.

Mote Marine Laboratory - \$4,000

Mote Aquaculture Research Park (MAP) was constructed in 2001 to pioneer the development of sustainable aquaculture technology to help feed the world, restock depleted species, and address the need to develop a viable, domestic aquaculture industry in the U.S. Today, MAP continues to advance this critical effort while hosting additional key components of Mote Marine Laboratory's mission.

Mote will use the grant funds for the following objectives: 1. Demonstrate sustainable farming practices in Mote's newly constructed Marine Aquaponics Farm using a variety of species (sea vegetables, periphyton and fish). 2. Identify new market opportunities for hydroponic sea vegetables and periphyton to increase environmental sustainability. 3. Provide educational opportunities for students, farmers and the local community about environmentally friendly aquaculture and protecting natural resources.

Save our Seabirds - \$10,000

The mission of Save Our Seabirds is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release injured birds while educating the public about ways they can protect birds and their habitats. Birds that are unable to be returned to the wild are given permanent homes in the SOS Wild Bird Learning Center, an outdoor living museum open to the public and featuring more than 120 birds of 62 different species.

The grant funds will be used to design and implement a native sensory garden and bioswale at the entrance of our facility. The funds will be used to design the bioswale, purchase native plants, develop and install educational interpretive signs, and create and deliver programs for local schools and the public. Stormwater runoff is a major contributor to red-tide outbreaks, as nutrients from fertilizer, pet waste, streets, and parking areas increase the nutrient loading into our waterways. By proactively filtering the stormwater with native vegetation before it enters the bay, we will be working towards improving the water quality in our region that will directly benefit our marine life. It will also serve as a model for visitors to replicate on their own property.

Visible Men Academy, Bradenton, FL - \$2,500

The purpose of VMA is to deliver a high-quality educational experience that meets the specific needs of at-risk elementary school boys through the collaborative efforts of administrators, teachers, parents, the broader community, and the students themselves. The grant funds will be used to rebuild our edible garden which consists of 7 raised beds. We will need to buy wood, screws, new bags of soil, [organic] fertilizers, a few gardening tools [hoes, hand trowels, saw and rake]. We would also use the money to provide a shaded sitting area in this garden to hold lessons on gardening and other topics. For this we will need seating and an umbrella. In addition, we have created an area by our garden fence for the purpose of planting wildflowers or other pollinating plants and fruit trees.

St. Martha's Catholic School - \$2,000

St. Martha's maintains a variety of gardens within the school campus. Inter-disciplinary and hands-on units of study are built around the gardens which serves a science lab, vegetable garden and reflection center. The gardens include tower gardens, raised bed gardens, hydroponic tower gardens, butterfly garden, butterfly habitat, solitary beehive, compost bins, rain barrels, prayer garden, water refill stations, and fresh salad available for each school lunch. The grant funds will help defray the cost of a new garden shed, new watering hoses, new equipment, and tools for the students to use in the gardens, mulch and soil, and garden-related educational materials for the School Library and class projects. All students, in P3 through 8th Grade will benefit from new and unique, hands-on learning experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom and give them skills they can carry with them throughout their lives.

The Paradise Center - \$2,000

The Paradise Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life on Longboat Key by promoting accessible healthcare and providing year-round lifestyle enrichment programs. Our activities include daily options for exercise classes, meditation, arts and crafts projects, discussion groups and educational seminars. The Center will use the grant funds to add new garden beds that are smaller and portable, so we can move them throughout the year for appropriate sun exposure and to prevent overwatering during rainy season; it encourages people to volunteer their time and expertise and helps prevent loneliness and depression and will provide a source of revenue for the Center by selling the herbs, vegetables, fruit, flowers, etc. that we grow.

Longboat Key Turtle Watch - \$2,500

The primary purpose of LBKTW is to support sea turtle conservation, educate the community, provide education for volunteers through hands-on training, lectures, educational gatherings, and to support monitoring the habitat, nesting, and hatching of sea turtles on the Manatee County portion of Longboat Key. The grant money will be used to replenish educational materials for the annual distribution to beachfront properties of the sea turtle "Flip a Switch Make a Move" campaign; it includes table tents, coasters, window clings, chair tags, rack cards and door hangers. The primary goal is to bring conservation awareness to residents and visitors.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties (BGCSDC) - \$2,250

This grant is to support educational and environmental field trips this summer for Club members who would not otherwise be able to afford to participate. Trips are planned for Mote, Selby, Ringling, Conservation Foundation, and other environmental organizations. These field trips are an integral part of the Summer as they supplement the academic and enrichment programming happening at the Club and help students become well-rounded individuals. These opportunities provide valuable, hands-on experiential learning opportunities to learn about marine life, water conservation, wildlife conservation, local flora, arts and being responsible stewards of our lands and community. By getting to visit these organizations and learn firsthand from professionals in the field, our Club members get the unique opportunity to become actively engaged and connected to these initiatives while learning how they can contribute to these efforts.