

The Citrus County Education Foundation does many things to support our students and teachers in their endeavors. Whether it is school/classroom supplies, hygiene products or scholarships, there is always something that is needed. And among the many activities and fundraising they do, there are also programs that strengthen and reinforce learning. Tiffany King of the CCEF presented her niche in this foundation, Reading Pals. Reading Pals is supported financially by the charitable arm of Publix. Prior to being a part of this organization, Reading Pals was a part of the United Way. Organizers felt that it was better positioned with the CCEF, and Tiffany is now running the show. Reading Pals is an early literacy program for mainly Pre-K students who have been identified as needing additional one-on-one attention in the process of learning to read. Many of these young students have never had a book or have never had a book read to them. Through the use of volunteers who dedicate one hour a week to the program, they are able to give these children engagement and encouragement in the reading process. By the end of the year, these students will be better prepared for kindergarten and will also have received 12 books of their very own! As always, additional volunteers are needed from September-May. Tiffany also mentioned her other project – Mentorship for selected high school students who need adult assistance in figuring out their future and giving them support to try and achieve their goals. Whether it is helping them find a way to further their education or how to get a business started, the mentor will help them explore avenues, give them ideas, advise and assist on skills needed, and share contacts that may have to get them on their way. They may become a sounding board, a good friend, or a listening and caring ear. Are you interested in volunteering for this? Ask Tiffany.

#### Other News:

\*Community Grants applications are now available with a deadline of April 1.

\*Bonnie thanked all of us for the sponsorship support for the Brewfest. Things are beginning to improve.

\*Lisa said the baskets for the Silent Auction are mostly done now and are up on the website, but are not going live yet.

\*John Murphy thanked all the volunteers for their support of the Strawberry Shortcake stand. He also awarded a special honor to Jennifer Duca for being the “Tip Queen” of the event. The tips were roughly \$700 this year, and John believes that she single-handedly got \$500 of it. Way to Go Jennifer!!! A special thank you went out to the volunteers that worked both days. What a great group of people they are.

#### Dates:

March 7/8 – Outdoor Expo Beer Pouring

March 16 – St Patrick’s Day Parade Float Decorating, 1pm, Lora Wilson’s House

March 22 – BREWFEST

March 27 – Medical Equipment Sorting for Relief Share with medical students at Central Florida College

March 29 – Six Club Social

50/50 - \$23 to Bonnie Rybak

Happy/sad - \$95

And finally, in the spirit of the Irish celebration this month.....”May the road rise up to meet you”.