

MARTIN COUNTY

Time to apply for Live Your Dream Awards

Courtesy of Jackie Holfelder

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STUART – Since 1972, Soroptimist International's Live Your Dream Awards program has been helping women who are working to better their lives through additional schooling and skills training.

The financial support they receive is often the difference in whether or not they can continue with the education that is so precious to them.



Edwards

impacted by COVID-19.

The application process for the 2021 Live Your Dream Awards began on Aug. 1 and the enrollment process – which is completely online – couldn't be sim-

This spring, Soroptimist International of Stuart (SIS) was able to present three women with 2020 awards in spite of the fact that the nonprofit's fundraising abilities had been seriously im-

pler.

The parameters for the Live Your Dream award specify the recipient be a primary breadwinner for themselves and their dependents, be attending an undergraduate degree program or a vocational skills training program and have a financial need.

Recent winners have used their monetary awards at local schools such as IRSC and Keiser University to pursue degrees and careers in nursing, digital media, health care management and so-

cial work, among other fields.

Eligible applicants can submit their application between Aug. 1-Nov. 15. Ultimately, a Live Your Dream Awards finalist has the potential receive up to \$16,000 to help offset tuition costs, purchase books, get transportation, or find reliable childcare so she can worry less about how to pay her bills and focus on reaching her dreams.

For more information or to apply for a Live Your Dream award online, visit www.soroptimistofstuart.org.

\$100,000 grant from Impact100 Martin helps House of Hope

Courtesy of Rob Ranieri

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STUART – House of Hope is a recipient of a \$100,000 grant from Impact100 Martin to expand its "Feeding Families for Success" program.

The impact grant provides critical funding for enhancing production capabilities at the Growing Hope Farm in Palm City and the Elisabeth Lahti Nutrition Center in Stuart.

Both Growing Hope Farm and the Lahti Nutrition Center are innovative approaches to feeding the hungry in Martin County. They provide fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables so that House of Hope can not only feed people but also provide them with healthy food.

Thanks to the Impact 100 Grant, Growing Hope Farm will increase capacity within its hydroponic greenhouse, adding almost 5,000 plants to its trellis growing systems.

The farm is already producing 1,400 packages of food weekly to improve the diets of those who seek help from House of Hope.

The Elisabeth Lahti Nutrition Center, which currently produces 1,600 packages each week of healthy meals and salads for clients and partners, will use the grant funding to create more productive workspace and automate tasks



Impact100 Martin grant check presentation, from left, Stephen Schramm, Rob Ranieri and Genevieve George. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO FROM ROB RANIERI

such as dishwashing and food processing. The expansion will allow for more meals to be delivered to food pantries each week.

"We know that healthy children are better learners, and healthy adults are 'better earners' – becoming more successful in the workforce and increasing

their chances for financial independence," says Rob Ranieri, Chief Executive Officer of House of Hope.

"House of Hope is very grateful to the outstanding philanthropists of Impact100 Martin for supporting us in our efforts and to the Community Foundation of Martin-St. Lucie. which has been

an essential partner in our community outreach."

Expansion plans reflect the growing need for food assistance within the community, particularly since the start of the Covid-19 epidemic.

Beginning in March 2020, House of Hope registered more than 700 new families and 1,500 individuals.

"The people coming through our doors were faces we'd never seen before. People who had never before in their lives needed help putting food on the table were struggling to survive. It was heartbreaking," explains Ranieri.

Increased production from Growing Hope Farm and Lahti Nutrition Center will add to the nutritious foods that can be distributed to more than 7,000 clients a month served through House of Hope's four food pantries and an additional 3,500 people who are served through 24 community food partners.

"Sadly, a year after the impact of the pandemic first began to be felt, the need for our food pantries and food bank partners hasn't declined," says Ranieri. "House of Hope is continuously evolving and improving to meet that community need. We've risen to the challenge."

To learn more about House of Hope, visit www.hohmartin.org or call 772-286-4673.

Updates and announcements can also be found on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.