

PEOPLE

Charities benefit from local biz guys' 'grand' idea



Crossover Mission representatives Gavin D'Elia, Cathy De Schouwer and William Harris.



Florida Archery Foundation representatives Boris Robinson and Mike Lundeen with Scott Alexander, Northern Trust Regional President and IRCF Board Chairman.



Business for a Better Indian River County representatives Anthony Delia, Brian Shambo, Scott Nuttall and Ryan Weaver.

BY MARY SCHENKEL
Staff Writer

The Indian River Community Foundation is continually seeking ways to spark interest in innovative charitable initiatives within the community, whether through individual donor-advised funds or philanthropic alliances such as the 12 local businessmen who recently established a Business for a Better Indian River County Fund.

The businessmen each contributed \$1,000 to a Field of Interest fund and asked IRCF for help in identifying small, up-and-coming charities that could benefit from a \$5,000 grant. They also set aside another \$1,000 to be used by the Community Foundation to pay for local nonprofit representatives to attend classes at the Edyth Bush Institute of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership at Rollins College.

Just prior to last Tuesday afternoon's IRCF board meeting at Northern Trust, Business for a Better Indian River County representatives presented grants to two emerging charities; awarding \$5,000 each to Crossover Mission and the Florida

Archery Foundation.

Crossover Mission seeks to motivate academic excellence in at-risk youth through after-school athletic programs, stressing equally athletics, academics and mentorship. The Florida Archery Foundation encourages the mental, physical and emotional health of archers of all ages, ultimately leading to character, confidence and community involvement.

"We're all local business guys and it was a way for us to pool resources where we could make a more significant contribution to a small charity," said Ryan Weaver, president of Ryan Weaver Insurance. "Our intention is to do this annually in partnership with the Community Foundation."

The check presentation also presented an opportunity for the two charities to "pitch" their missions during a timed question and answer session with IRCF board members in hopes of garnering an additional grant of up to \$5,000.

Jeff Pickering, IRCF CEO, hoped the experience would provide board members with a greater understanding of the needs of the local nonprofit sector, particularly the

great work being done by organizations with operating budgets under \$250,000.

Pickering explained that the majority of the \$8 million in grants awarded through the IRCF last year came from clients' donor-advised funds, but that roughly \$525,000 was awarded after a rigorous grant review process undertaken by an IRCF grants committee.

"While this has been a good process, one of the limitations is that it

has somewhat of a one-size-fits-all approach, and it doesn't provide opportunities for others to participate outside of the grants committee and our board," said Pickering. "I expect that we will continue to work with Business for a Better Indian River County and other giving groups to find, fund and follow organizations, programs and projects like those at Crossover Mission and Florida Archery Foundation that will make our community better." ■

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