

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Youth Achievement Center holds public tours of Gifford facility

CHRISTINA TASCON

FOR LUMINARIES
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

As the winter season opened, Gifford Youth Achievement Center invited the public and area leaders to its Open House Tour of the facility on Nov. 16.

Although it was a rainy evening, a good crowd of visitors attended, including Indian River County Fire Chief John King; David W. Jackson, director of Community Relations to U.S. Rep. Bill Posey; and Dr. Nick and Elaine Coppola of the Live Like Cole Foundation.

Guests enjoyed a humorous, yet touching tour by Freddie Woolfork, director of Public Relations & Facilities Operations, and had a chance to meet some of the children.

Visitors finished the tour with refreshments as they were able to meet and talk with some members of the staff, including Executive Director Angelia Perry.

Students created the “GYAC Students are on Track for Success” billboard in the front lobby with the help of artist Christine Thomas in partnership with the Vero Beach Museum of Art.

For more information, contact the Gifford Youth Achievement Center, 4875 43rd Ave., Vero Beach; 772-794-1005; or www.GYAC.net.

Mark your calendar

Gifford Youth Achievement Center’s



Dr. Nicholas Coppola spends a moment with Willis, one of the students who attends GYAC.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA TASCON/FOR LUMINARIES

20th Anniversary Gala

What: Celebrate the 20-year history of the Gifford Youth Achievement Center with a night of cocktails, dining and dancing as well as a fabulous raffle.

When: Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Where: Oak Harbor Club
Cost: \$150 per person, \$1,000 for table of eight

Tickets: Buy tickets online at www.GYAC.net; or call Peggy Gibbs at 772-794-1005, ext. 441



Gifford Youth Achievement Center board members Debbie Leeming, Liz Melnick and Carol Lockwood at the Open House Tour on Nov. 16.



Tim Girard, left, GYAC Executive Director Angelia Perry and John King at the Nov. 16 open house.

Indian River Habitat for Humanity’s president/CEO to retire

EVE KYOMYA

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Indian River Habitat for Humanity’s President and CEO Andy Bowler plans to retire in April, according to Connie Poppell, board chair.

Bowler has led this award-winning Habitat affiliate since 2000.

In his 17 years at the helm, Bowler has taken this organization from a small volunteer nonprofit to one of Habitat for Humanity’s top performing affiliates.



Andy Bowler

During his tenure, Habitat has served 764 families locally with a combination of 332 new homes, 88 rehabbed homes and 344 repair projects, the last for the elderly, infirm and veterans.

Currently, the affiliate is on track in year 2 of their 5-year plan to serve 500 more families. This very ambitious challenge is only made possible by the support Habitat has received locally from donors and volunteers.

“Andy recognized the dire on-going need for affordable housing in this community, and had the vision to build the organization to address this deficiency,” said Poppell.

Under Bowler’s leadership the affiliate’s practice of tithing enabled Indian River Habitat to help 880 families internationally with much needed shelter, often after natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes.

Many in Indian River County know Habitat through its ReStore, located on U.S. 1 in Vero Beach. This 40,000-square-

foot newly expanded retail facility sells a large selection of donated home furnishings and building materials. Nearly one in three of the homes the affiliate builds is funded through the proceeds of the ReStore.

During the next several months a committee will conduct a nationwide search for Bowler’s successor.

For more information about Indian River Habitat for Humanity, visit its website at ircHabitat.org; or contact Eve Kyomya at 772-562-9860, extension 209; ekyomya@ircHabitat.org.