

'IT MAKES US FEEL GOOD'



"The Good Place" (NBC) with Kristen Bell and Ted Danson COLLEEN HAYES, NBC

We Care: Lights, camera and community action

If you have something to share, let us know

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Michael, from the NBC comedy "The Good Place," is an immortal being played by Ted Danson who constructs neighborhoods for people to live in when they reach the afterlife.

He's also a demon.

Funny, then, that this quote also comes from him, toward the end of the series:

"What matters isn't if people are good or bad. What matters is if they're trying to be better today than they were yesterday. You asked me where my hope comes from? That's my answer."

Thank you — for the work you do to make our community a community, even when we're apart. And thank you, too, for trying to be better today.

It's all we can do.

If you have something you'd like to share, please email us at features@naplesnews.com. Please include your name, contact info and any details we might need to write up something short and sweet.

Keeping the light on

Bill Kilgus is, literally, in the business of brightening people's lives.

As an owner of Trimmers Holiday Decor Inc., he only had a few ways he could help when he learned a neighbor down the street had lost their job. So he went over and lit their yard in lights: red, white and blue.

The thought behind the patriotic col-



A yard lit by Trimmers Holiday Decor, Inc., in Golden Gate Estates.

COURTESY OF MARJI KILGUS.

ors, Kilgus said, is to help people feel united and let others know everyone is in this together. And, as it turns out, that house was just the first.

"We said, 'You know what? I'm going to see if some other people want it done,'" Kilgus said.

Now there are at least nine homes on his street in the Golden Gate Estates that are lit in lights from Trimmers Holiday Decor — all free of charge. That's more than 1,000 sets of lights at 50 lights each on one street alone.

To hear Kilgus tell it, neighbors and passersby have loved the unexpected shimmer.

"It makes us feel good that we made them feel good," he said. "Because this is not a good time. We're kind of fortunate that we're doing well throughout this, but a lot of other people aren't doing well."

A meal and more

The Port Royal Association had two goals: supporting local businesses and letting first responders and medical workers know they're appreciated.

One creative solution let them do

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both. Executive Director Jenna Heiderman said that by drawing from reserves accumulated through membership fees and other initiatives, the Port Royal Association was able to buy more than 150 gift cards from around 30 local restaurants, all of which were \$40 gift cards. In total, the association purchased more than 5,100 gift cards.

And where did those gift cards go? To first responders in the city of Naples, from police officers to firefighters to EMT personnel. Beyond that, they're also providing gift cards to the entire NCH hospital staff.

The Board of Directors for the Association approved the purchase unanimously, Heiderman said.

"It's just really important that we give back to the people who are working on our behalf," she said. "Port Royal is a great community that has a lot of resources to be able to allocate to people who need it and need help. What better way to support the city we live in?"

Isles of Good

Marbella Isles has been a stellar example of community support and activity.

Kathy Doll, who is the social chair within the community, rattled off a laundry list of kindness and good deeds.

There was the two-week food drive benefiting St. Matthews' House that's just finishing up. There was the thank-you night, where everyone was encouraged to step into their front yards wearing blue to support hospital works. There were the hoagies donated to hospital workers and a massive mask-making effort that produced thousands of masks. There were chalk messages on the sidewalk, too. And there are the three signs thanking hospital workers that are planned to travel between the NCH and Physicians Regional.

Really, so much came out of the community that it's hard to nail it all down, but the community's kindness speaks for itself.

"I just think that we are all truly blessed. We have such wonderful neighbors here," Doll said. "I've never been in a neighborhood like this, where everyone is caring and kind."

Other good news

Dunbar High School's Advancement Via Individual Determination team



Carl Falk, one of the AVID teachers at Dunbar High School, delivered cupcakes and cookies to those working with COVID-19 patients at Lee Memorial Hospital alongside fellow AVID teacher Heather Carter. COURTESY OF CARL FALK

made a donation, alongside the Lady-Cakes Bakery of Cape Coral and Chloe's Cookies of Fort Myers, to those working with COVID-19 patients at Lee Memorial Hospital. Workers Tuesday received 40 cupcakes and 40 cookies and a "Thank You" note from the team, showing their appreciation for those saving lives.

Last week, The Comrie Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit based in Boca Grande, donated \$25,000 to the Cape Coral Caring Center. According to a news release, these funds will help the Cape Coral Caring Center continue to provide food and other assistance as needs grow due to the coronavirus.

Also last week, Lipman Family Farms donated 700 bags of produce to frontline medical workers with Physicians Regional Hospital and Lee Health.

The Healthcare Network has repurposed its Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. Originally, it was outfitted for dental care and used for school visits and outreach, but according to a news release, the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation issued a \$10,000 emergency COVID-19 grant to allow the mobile unit to shift its focus toward infant well visits, including vaccinations and risk assessments.

Bonita Bay resident Mary Calabrese shared that her husband, Joe Calabrese, helped organize a blood drive for April 29 and May 1, and now has more than 100 people signed up to donate. Like many other communities, Bonita Bay also has donated 1,000 masks and are beginning to sew for farmworkers in Immokalee.

CEO and Executive Artistic Director of the Naples Players, Bryce Alexander, wrote in an email that the theatre's scene shop constructed custom plexiglass intubation boxes tailored to NCH's requests for free. The boxes can help protect medical workers while intubating patients.

The Marbella at Pelican Bay, not to be confused with Marbella Isles, has also done its part to make sure residents within the independent living community feel loved. Director of Activities Cathy Orban wrote in an email that the community held an outdoor concert for residents to enjoy from their lanais. For Easter, staff created a bunny-theme desert delivered to every door in the building, and every person with a birthday this month received a birthday balloon and some cake, too.

Dena Liston, chief development offi-

cer of the Boys & Girls Club of Collier County, wrote in an email that while club members are out of school and displaced from the community organization, the Club is still providing meal kits, school supplies and online activities, among other outreach initiatives.

Students at the Collier Charter Academy pitched in to make a video slideshow expressing how much they missed their teachers, showing off hand-written notes of love and appreciation and that they want to come back to see their teachers.

The Naples-based Halstatt Charitable Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the investment firm Halstatt, donated 4,500 KN95 masks to organizations like NCH and the David Lawrence Center.

Thirty iPads were donated by individuals through the Lee Health Foundation to assist with patient visitation across social distancing measures. The iPads have been distributed through the hospitals, and are configured with an app so patients can send a link to family and friends to start a video conference.

Vineyards Country Club will donate and deliver 175 meals to NCH's downtown Baker Hospital this morning. Through April, Vineyards Country Club has donated more than 700 meals to healthcare workers across both NCH hospitals and the Physicians Regional Medical Center. Florida 4-H members, including those in Lee County, have been participating in a pen pal program, Pen Friends, to correspond with about 250 4-H youth across the country.

The Fifth Avenue South Business Improvement District announced a new marketing initiative, #UnitedonFifth, to bolster business for the nearly 15% of businesses still open, according to a news release. One of the first programs through the new initiative is called Feeding the Frontline, which will provide NCH Healthcare workers, EMS personnel and police officers with donated food from Fifth Avenue South restaurants.

In partnership with the California Pizza Kitchen, Waterside Shops donated nearly 1,000 meals across Southwest Florida throughout three weeks, including first responders and The Shelter for Abused Women and Children, according to a news release.

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