



# LENDING

**Thanks to the Key Biscayne Community Foundation, those who want to improve life on the island have a way to make their philanthropic wishes come true — one good deed at a time.**

TEXT BY JACQUELYN BENSON

**T**he world-famous beaches, beautiful neighborhoods, and thriving arts and culture scene are just a few of the qualities that make Key Biscayne such a special place. But at the heart of the island's appeal lies a secret – the generosity of a league of donors and philanthropists committed to improving life in the community. Instrumental to bridging the gap between those good intentions and their realization is the Key Biscayne Community Foundation [KBCF], a public charity that helps donors meet their philanthropic goals from start to finish. “In addition to the philanthropic knowledge we give to our donors, we offer professional investment management and administrative services like accounting, regulatory filings, grant requests and grantmaking. Because we are a public charity, and not a private foundation, our donors receive the maximum tax benefit immediately,” explains Executive Director Melissa McCaughan White. The foundation helps donors on a global scale, but it’s the focus on the Key Biscayne community that has made many of the area’s philanthropists want to work with them.





# HANDS





“I believe in giving locally and affecting globally,” says founding member Edgardo DeFortuna. DeFortuna, the president and founder of Fortune International, sits on the KBCF honorary board of directors. He’s also an active contributor to life in the community through his work with St. Agnes, St. Stephens and Mt. Sinai. “I want to cause change as directly as possible, and know that my contributions have real and measurable results,” he says. For DeFortuna, it’s about being in it for the long haul. “Giving back isn’t about immediate results – it’s about staying engaged and giving continuing support.”



**NAME:** Edgardo DeFortuna  
**ROLE:** President & Founder of Fortune International  
**KEY CAUSES:** Manos del Sur, St. Stephens, St. Agnes, Mt. Sinai Foundation and KBCF  
**QUOTE:** “I’m very blessed with a happy and healthy family.

That motivates me even more to give back to those not as fortunate. So I try to affect change as directly as possible; knowing that my contributions have real and measurable results. My motto is to give locally and affect globally.”

## WORTHY CAUSES

The Key Biscayne Community Foundation has given to more than 50 worthwhile non-profits on and off the Key since 2004. Here are a few of them:



**American Cancer Society:**  
 The KB Relay for Life is an annual event that brings the community together for cancer awareness and to fundraise for cancer research.



**Biscayne Nature Center:**  
 This not-for-profit organization is dedicated to eco education and the encouragement of greater citizen participation in the protection of the environment.



**The Children's Trust:**  
 Dedicated to improving the lives of children through the promotion of health, safety, development and parental & community involvement.



**NAME:** Jill Gomez  
**ROLE:** Race Director  
**KEY CAUSES:** Key Biscayne Lighthouse Run  
**QUOTE:** "We bring our community together as volunteers, athletes and residents. The Key Biscayne

Lighthouse Run donates all net profits to the various charities that volunteer for us. Running is my passion so being able to combine that with raising money for the greater good and influencing others to get out and run makes me happy!"



**NAMES:** Alexa Pennell and Theo Holloway  
**ROLE:** Philanthropists  
**KEY CAUSES:** Ocean Conservation & Education  
**QUOTE:** "We just set up a donor-advised fund with the KBCF. I was taught the value

of philanthropy from a very early age when my parents created the Holloway Family Foundation. We are both extremely passionate about preserving our oceans and developing a better understanding of them."

Jill Gomez is one example of someone who has seen first-hand how the foundation can help make that long-term strategy possible. Gomez is the director of the Key Biscayne Lighthouse Run, South Florida's oldest 10K race, which donates up to \$10,000 a year to local charities. "The KBCF has taken us under their 501 (c) (3) status, as an agency fund, and has provided the administrative, accounting and financial assistance we desperately needed," says Gomez. "We've been with them for 3 years and it has been a great relationship." It's a bond that has given her more time to focus on what's important: "It's important to give people on and off the Key a wonderful race to run or walk while hopefully motivating them to get out and exercise more."

Part of the foundation's success in helping people like Gomez is the amazing group of people involved. Take, for example, the foundation's chairman, Patrick Dwyer. Dwyer has been with Merrill Lynch for 17 years and is Sr. VP of Investments. He has been named by Barron's as one of the top financial advisors in the U.S. for the last three years. Dwyer and his colleagues on the Board of Directors comprise an impressive "think-tank," and that's a big part of the reason why high-profile donors have come to trust the foundation with efforts that come so close to their hearts.

It doesn't get much more personal for philanthropist Patricia Woodson Weinman, who established a family donor-advised fund through the foundation in honor of her mother, Dicie Cassady Woodson. "My mother was a life-long educator – a teacher, college professor, principal, reading specialist and a strong supporter of libraries and literacy programs," says Weinman, a key force behind the creation of the Key Biscayne Community Center and a board member for the City Theater. Weinman and her daughters worked with then-director Anne Roth to select projects and organizations that befitted her mother's memory. "The challenge is to make a difference in this world where the need for inspiration in education is so great," Weinman says. With the help of KBCE, the fund has already helped to establish libraries at St. Christopher's Montessori School and at the Presbyterian School, and has donated to Voices United, a unique music and theater program created by Key Biscayne native Katie Christie.

Weinman isn't the only one the foundation is helping with close-to-the-heart causes. For Alexa Pennell and Theo Holloway, few things are as special – and important – as the preservation of the world's oceans. They wanted their efforts to have a local impact, but found it a true challenge. "Since only national organizations would qualify [as 501 (c) (3)s],



**Key Biscayne Youth Council:**  
 The Youth Council promotes mature citizenship, personal development & achievement, leadership and an understanding of government among the local youth.



**Alzheimer's Association:**  
 This wonderful national organization is completely devoted to trying to eliminate Alzheimer's disease and its detrimental effects through the advancement of research.



*Casa Valentina*

**Casa Valentina:**  
 Casa Valentina's mission is focused on helping young women transition successfully from foster care to independent living. Their efforts have been commended by the community.



**NAME:** U.S. Century Bank  
**ROLE:** Conchita Caserta, Senior V.P. and Arturo Fundora, Branch Manager  
**KEY CAUSES:** Key Biscayne Chamber of Commerce, Dade Partner of Key Biscayne Community School, KB Fourth of July Parade & Key Biscayne Relay for Life

**QUOTE:** "U.S. Century Bank not only encourages our involvement with community organizations and programs, but it is part of the philosophy to give back to the communities we serve. In 2005, when U.S. Century Bank opened its branch on the Key, we wanted to be able to show our commitment to this community. We continue that tradition today."



**NAMES:** Patricia, Julia & Lia Weinman  
**ROLE:** Family Philanthropy  
**KEY CAUSES:** City Theatre & Voices United  
**QUOTE:** "Four years ago, we established our

family's donor-advised fund at the KBCF in honor of mother and grandmother Dicie Cassidy Woodson. She dedicated her life to education. The arts are a passion our entire family loves. Education through the arts is an interest the 3 of us are very excited to share with the world."

the funds couldn't be appropriated to the local chapters," Theo says. "Fortunately, the KBCF presented the perfect solution because now they provide the investment management, help find qualifying organizations and handle all the administrative responsibilities."

Conchita Caserta, the Sr. VP of the Key Biscayne branch of U.S. Century bank, agrees. "In 2005, when U.S. Century Bank opened its branch on the Key, we wanted to be able to show our commitment to this community, and starting a donor-advised fund at the newly formed Key Biscayne Community Foundation," she says. "The challenge is always the same: How do you choose among so many worthwhile causes? Partnering with KBCF, through which we make many of our donations, has helped."

For Executive Director Melissa McCaughan White, it's only the beginning. "We want to continue to promote the importance of philanthropy as well as the many benefits of giving," she says. "And, as always, our goal is to achieve our donors' charitable objectives."

Since so many of those objectives involve improving life on the island and within the greater community, the Key Biscayne Community Foundation is sure to be a quietly vital part of the community for years to come.

*For more information or to get involved with the Key Biscayne Community Foundation, located at 50 W. Mashia Dr. in Key Biscayne, call 305.361.2770 or visit [KeyBiscayneFoundation.org](http://KeyBiscayneFoundation.org).* **KB**