

Night For Champions Report (Nancy Mireles, CDO)

Night For Champions Gala was a success! It was an evening filled with friends and donors all focused on our mission & vision to serve more students and educators in Collier County.

An event like this can be a valuable component to an individual donor's journey and to our strategy to acquire new donors. The Development Team is analyzing the details of the event to inform our overall strategy.

Here are some stats from this year's event:

- **Total attendees: 241**
- **Total Fund-a-Need Donors: 77** (keep in mind a couple will only be reflected as a single donor in this total)
 - **2026 Fund-a-Need Total: \$618,000**
- **Total gross dollars raised: \$946,849** (this amount has increased post event as some donations have come in after the event and/or guests increased their giving) includes ticket sales, table sales, sponsorships, donations, live auction & fund-a-need
- **Total net: \$716,621**

Donor Category	Total Number of Donors	Total Donations	Notes
First Time Donor	21	\$67,500	Gala is their first gift
New Donor - has only one gift on record prior to the gala	6	\$51,250	
Consecutive Donor – no lapse in annually giving	43	\$537,000	15 donors gave at a higher level with an increase of \$163,750 5 donors gave at a lower level with a decrease of \$38,250 14 donors gave at the same level with a total of \$189,750
Returning Donor – lapsed donor who gave at the gala	7	\$32,500	2 donors increased giving from previous gift

While some donors like to give during an event, our strategy is to focus on donor cultivation – matching their passions and interests with our mission and unmet need. This often means a donor wishes to give during other times of the year and in different ways. For donors who attended in 2025 but not in 2026, we have opened communication and are focused on re-engaging them with an opportunity for them to continue their support of CFL.

Stats on donors from 2025 event compared to 2026 event:

- **2025 Total attendees: 340**
- **2025 Total Donors: 114** (keep in mind a couple will only be reflected as a single donor in this total)
- **2025 Gala Donors who Did Not attend 2026 Gala: 72**
 - **16 donors** from this set, made a FY26 gift to CFL (or to the event) in the **sum total of \$1,121,391** – this is an increase of \$937,391 from their 2025 giving of \$184,000 (11 in this set increased their gift from 2025)
 - The remaining 56 donors who did not attend in 2026 are receiving personalized outreach.
- **2025 Gala Donors who DID attend & give at the 2026 Gala: 41**
 - Total 2026 donations from this set of donors is \$468,340 compared to \$426,250; showing an increase giving of \$42,090
 - Of this set, 34 donors maintained or increased their gift amount.
- **2025/2026 Comparison:** The 2025 net Gala proceeds were \$853,252, in comparison with the 2026 net Gala proceeds of \$716,621. If one adds the 2026 net Gala proceeds with the FY26 gifts of 2025 Gala donors who did not attend the 2026 donor, the sum of \$1,838,012 far exceeds the 2025 net Gala proceeds.

We had great energy that night and in order to keep the momentum we have implemented the following post gala follow up:

- Phone calls were made from either Eric or a member of the Development Team if they:
 - Are a first time donor
 - First time donors were invited to build a further relationship with us and asked how they'd like to stay in touch and/or get involved

- Are in a caseload assigned to Danielle or Nancy
 - Expressed interest in Volunteering
 - Are a Board Member, sponsor or table patron
- 24-hours following the event all guests (who have an email address on file with us) received a Thank You email
- Tuesday following the event all guests received an additional follow up email
 - Guests who gave – Thank You email
 - Guests who attended but didn't give – Thank You for attending with the option to still make a gift
- Within 30 days of the event all others in our donor database received an email highlighting the event with video reel, giving them the opportunity to give
- All payments received to date have also been acknowledged with a thank you letter.

In addition to looking at the event donor stats, we are looking at our strengths and opportunities for improvement with the event flow. We have received incredibly positive feedback on our student engagement and speaker messages. We recognize that the event time ran longer than preferred.