



**To:** Members, Board of Directors  
**From:** *EW* Eric Williams, Ed.D., CEO & President  
**Date:** 2/18/2026  
**Subject:** Confidential Board Update

### Notes

1. We can't wait for the Night For Champions gala this Saturday. We are so grateful to have 100% participation among Board members! 12 seniors who participate in our student programs, three alumni of student programs, and a former Golden Apple recipient will be in attendance. You may wish to make a point of introducing other guests to the students and teacher during the reception. The reception will be held in the Vanderbilt Courtyard and there will be three cocktail tables in the Courtyard that will serve as a "home base" for the students, alumni, and teacher. The students will wear "ask me about student programs" tags.
2. We continue to need your assistance in referring prospective volunteers to Champions For Learning. With our expansion of student programs, we still need to recruit dozens of mentors in the coming weeks in addition to volunteers in other areas. Tonight we have a volunteer recruitment social. On February 9, we divided up the list of all current mentors among all Champions For Learning team members – we each called a group of current volunteers to ask them to consider bringing a prospective volunteer to our recruitment event today. This whole team approach reflects the "all hands on deck" mentality we have for volunteer recruitment and we'd love to have you join us in this recruitment effort.
3. Please consider attending the Principals Breakfast on March 31 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. (note that the hours are slightly adjusted from what was listed in previous Board Updates). Board members can assist at this event by leading table conversations and taking notes during roundtable discussions with principals about the needs of their schools and our partnership with CCPS. Principals provide very important input to Champions For Learning through these roundtable discussions. For example, last year principals suggested schoolwide grants and returning the Golden Apple event to a sit-down dinner. The event is an expression of appreciation to principals, a celebration of what we've accomplished with them this year, and a request for their assistance in the coming year.

### Emails and Other Documents

1. *Community Engagement & Volunteers*; email from Anne Stavely; December 15, 2025; p.3-4
2. *Development Team Update*; email from Nancy Mireles; December 17, 2025; pps.5-7
3. *Financial and Administration Update*; February 16, 2026; p.8
4. *Student Programs*; email from Kristin Carolan; February 12, 2025; p.9

### Communication

1. *Naples Daily News Ad – Mentoring Call to Action [Half Page]*, January 30, 2026, Image Attached; p.10
2. *Naples Daily News Ad – Night For Champions [Half Page]*, February 6, 2026, Image Attached; p.11

### Key Dates

1. Night for Champions Gala – February 21, 2026, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; The Ritz-Carlton, Naples
2. Principals Breakfast – March 31, 2026, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.; Vineyards Country Club
3. Take Stock in Children Induction Ceremony – April 11, 2026; the Bower Chapel in Moorings Park
4. Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers – April 17, 2026; the Hyatt Regency, Coconut Point



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## Community Engagement & Volunteer Board Update

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From Anne Stavely <astavely@championsforlearning.org>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 2:16 PM

To Eric Williams <ewilliams@championsforlearning.org>

### Student Programs

- We will host an onboarding and training session for new mentors. Participants may attend either a virtual or in-person session on March 5.
- We will begin the matching process for new mentors and mentees in partnership with the student programs team in early March.

### Entrepreneurship

- Final school pitch dates begin in late March (School teams).
- The Collier County pitch date is April 9 at Gulf Coast High (School winners from all 8 schools).
- The Final Pitch Competition will be held in May (Top teams from Collier County competition).

### Educator Programs

- We will assist Marilyn with the Golden Apple Committee's selection meetings beginning this week.

### General Updates

- The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon will be held April 7 at The Players Club and Spa. I will begin crafting an invite with Sydney and coordinating the event with Wyatt.
- Thank you to Danielle for introducing me to Jenn Wideberg, Owner and Publisher of Paradise Coast Magazine and VP for the SWFL Ivy League Alumni Group. I am working with Jenn on a potential story and an opportunity to speak in front of the group.
- I am working with Andrea Daskalakis, Windstar Community Foundation member, to coordinate an opportunity to speak with residents about volunteering with Champions For Learning.
- I am working with Tom Reilly, President of the Penn State Alumni Association to coordinate a speaking opportunity.

- I will be speaking at the March 25 Naples Rotary meeting about CFL and our volunteer opportunities.

**Anne Stavely**

*Director of Community Engagement*

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Direct: (239)687-1370

***Make a Difference ~ Volunteer!***



***"Celebrating 35 years of supporting Collier County Students and Educators"***



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## Development - Board Update

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From Nancy Mireles <nmireles@championsforlearning.org>

Date Tue 2/17/2026 10:14 AM

To Eric Williams <ewilliams@championsforlearning.org>

### **Chief Development Officer (Nancy Mireles)**

Our Night For Champions gala is just a few days away and I look forward to seeing you all there! We have worked hard to identify and connect with friends, donors and guests to fill the room. Our guests will be inspired by the student testimonials, educator experiences and mentor & donor comments. This annual event is a wonderful step in a donor's journey with us, it's not the end point; and our post gala communication and engagement is just as important to us as the event itself. We have outlined a post gala communication plan for all guests in attendance, from first time donors to those who have been with us for years, and everyone in between. You'll be delighted to see immediate communication within 24 hours following the event, as well as continued engagement for the days, weeks and months to come.

Additionally, we have heard from some of our donors that they cannot attend this year but still have a passion for supporting our mission. We are working with those donors to set up individual meetings in the month to follow gala, so they too have the opportunity to make a gift to Champions.

With the guidance of Richard Perry, Giving Pathways, the Development Team has been working on new ways to tell our Champions For Learning story. You will start to see more focus on "the need" in our storytelling and how each person reading or hearing our story can make an impact; from volunteering their time to making a financial commitment.

### **Director of Special Events (Wyatt Blatt)**

#### **Night for Champions Gala:**

Gala Week is finally here! Please send any allergies/dietary preferences for you and your guests if there are.

- Please encourage your guests to pre-register once the Know-Before-You-Go email is sent out.

#### **Golden Apple Celebration:**

- Next week we are meeting at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point for a walkthrough of the newly renovated space.

### **Director of Digital Fundraising & Operations (Sydney Fahrenbruch)**

- **Night For Champions:** Majority of my time the last 2 weeks has been spent on Night For Champions Gala preparation, including:
  - Setting up software (GiveSmart) and documents needed for the check-in and check-out process, to ensure a smooth experience for guests making a gift the night of the Gala.
  - Working with the team on scripting and coordinating and communication with speakers.
  - Preparing various materials for the event including signage and event PowerPoints.
  - Posting on social media and coordinating eblasts to promote ticket sales.
  - Working with Becky and the team to prepare post-event communications.
- **Donor Newsletter:** Our second donor newsletter went out on February 4<sup>th</sup>, including updates on our programs and current news, to 719 of our current donors. It had a 58% open rate and a 2% click-through rate.
- **Golden Apple Prize Patrol:** I am working with Marilyn and the team to plan Golden Apple Prize Patrol Day, coordinating photography and press coverage.
- **Student Programs Branding:** With the approval of the Student Programs expansion, I am coordinating with the team on establishing a brand identity for our new programs and rolling out a marketing announcement for our program expansion. We are currently in the planning stages and hope to shift focus to this after Night For Champions.

### **Annual Giving and Grants (Rebekah Telfer)**

- Grant Applications and Reports Submitted
  - Bank of America – requested \$20,000 to support TSIC/CCP
  - Publix – submitted donations request for apples and lunches for the Golden Apple Prize Patrol
- Grant Applications and Reports in Process
  - Richard M. Schuzle Family Foundation – 6 month report for FY26 funding is due 3/10/26
  - Moorings Park – I'm keeping an eye on their website to determine when the grant application will open
  - Hobbs Foundation – LOI is due 4/1/26
  - Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation – LOI is due 4/24/26
- Spring Appeal
  - The segmented appeal stories have been written and are under review
  - Mailing lists are currently being pulled
- Night for Champions
  - I'm working with the Development Team on the Night for Champions script
  - I'm helping Sydney write and organize post event materials (emails, press release)
  - I'm writing acknowledgement letters for donors who make a gift during the event

- General
  - I'm putting together a program outline for the new Pathways to Success Program to help guide communications, marketing, and fundraising efforts with help from Eric and Kristin
  - I helped Danielle and Nancy write a proposal for Pathways to Success Program that was shared with a potential donor
  - I helped Development write a proposal for technical education scholarships to students that was shared with the Naples Woman's Club
  - I'm continuing to explore potential grant research software and potential national funders to increase our revenue from foundations/grants
  - I'm continuing to work with FPL and CCPS for the awarded Classroom Makeover Grant in planning the check presentation event and coordinating pre-award documentations

### **Major Gifts (Danielle Viens-Payne)**

- Veritus donor qualification process – Danielle's caseload
  - Sending qualification letters weekly in small groups of 10-20 donors
  - 46 qualified major donors so far
- Planning post-gala stewardship
- Creating attendee bios for NFC to prepare for donor cultivation and stewardship at the event
- Donor and prospect meetings
- Sending 6-month post-gift impact letters to appropriate donors
- Working with development consultant weekly
- Working with Mary and Nancy on updating the donor walls
  - First focusing on updating the Visionary Trust Wall of \$1M+ lifetime giving
- Exploring potential hosts for 1-2 parlor meetings in the Spring
- Working with Wyatt, Anne, and key Board members on cultivating and stewarding corporations
- Continuing personalizing major gift stewardship plans for each donor
- Cultivating spring gifts

### **Nancy Mireles, CNP**

*Chief Development Officer*

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**Update 02.18.26**

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**From** Ann Kohler <AKohler@championsforlearning.org>

**Date** Mon 2/16/2026 10:13 AM

**To** Eric Williams <ewilliams@championsforlearning.org>

**Finance and Administration**

- Continued meetings to become familiar with the various programs and grants at CFL.
- Working on creating standard reports in Blackbaud (Financial Edge and Raiser's Edge).
- I have meetings scheduled to start the primary conversations regarding the FY2027 Budget.

**Ann Kohler**

*Chief Finance & Administration Officer*

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**ChampionsForLearning.org**

CHAMPIONS FOR  
LEARNING

*"Celebrating 35 years of supporting Collier County Students  
and Educators"*



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## Board Update

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From Kristin Carolan <KCarolan@championsforlearning.org>

Date Thu 2/12/2026 4:27 PM

To Eric Williams <ewilliams@championsforlearning.org>

### Student Programs:

Our 10th grade application currently has 40 in progress and 9 completed. I followed up with the district on February 11th, offering that our staff can go out to schools to help students apply or complete their application. On Feb 3rd and 4th, we hosted ACT and SAT prep for CFL students in 10th -12th grade. The week of February 9th, Take Stock in Children interviews occurred. We interviewed 47 students and each attended with a parent. We had 2 selection committees made up of 3 members, who were either former mentors or alums of the program. The committee will meet with staff on the 17th to review scores and discuss students. Student advocacy meetings have been on going for Q3. On the 13th I had a call with NCF to discuss spring break camp planning at LWTC. We will be given an allotted number of slots for our students to participate in learning about Technical Pathways. Camp will run from March 8th -12th. The office will be closed on Presidents Day and there will not be a CFL mentor Zoom session. I also attended a Future Ready Collier meeting where we discussed having Tracy Jones do a FASFA: Train the Trainer session. This would allow us to have our community partners trained to help Champions increase FASFA completion throughout Collier County. Our next Career Exploration date is February 17th which will cover Medical and Human Services.

### Kristin Carolan

Sr. Director of Student Programs

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CHAMPIONS FOR  
LEARNING

**To serve as a catalyst for educational success by investing in Collier's students and educators.**



# Make A Difference Through Mentoring

Change the life of a young person by becoming a Take Stock in Children mentor with Champions For Learning.

## Why Become A Mentor?

*Take Stock Mentors help students build confidence, establish goals, and improve their academic skills as they work toward high school completion and college enrollment.*



## How To Get Involved

Contact Volunteer Manager, Nicole Luque to learn more at [NLuque@championsforlearning.org](mailto:NLuque@championsforlearning.org) or [\(239\) 643.4633](tel:(239)643.4633) or scan the QR code to visit our volunteer website!



# Celebrate

EDUCATION IN COLLIER COUNTY



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026**

**6 PM**

at **THE RITZ-CARLTON, NAPLES**

280 Vanderbilt Beach Road | Naples, FL 34108

Entertainment Provided By **BLONDE AMBITION BAND**

*Please join us* for our signature fundraising event in support of our mission to serve as a catalyst for educational success by investing in Collier's students and educators. The evening features sunset cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner, live music, and dancing in The Ritz-Carlton, Naples' Vanderbilt Ballroom. Inspirational speakers and a live and fund-a-need auction highlight the community's commitment to investing in students and educators, showcasing the **transformative power of education.**

## OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

### GRADUATE SPONSOR



### EVENT SPONSORS

B&I Contractors, Inc.	London Bay	Stock Development
Florida Gulf Coast University	Naples Daily News	Wilson & Johnson
	Naples Illustrated	

Sponsors as of November 14, 2025

## NIGHT FOR CHAMPIONS GALA

### EVENT CHAIR

Anne Girod

### EVENT COMMITTEE

Jerry Brown	Julie Diermeier	Brenda O'Connor
Ann Cohn	Debra Ezzell	Toni Mueller
Helena Dabrowski	Rafael Feliciano	Kat Zagel

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