

CFI Vice Chair Melissa Congress named 2023 Distinguished Volunteer



October 10, 2023 (Sanibel, FL) – Philanthropists and volunteers typically go about their good works quietly without expecting anything in return.

However, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Collier-Lee Chapter (AFP) plans to honor deserving local philanthropists and distinguished volunteers, during its National Philanthropy Day Celebration on Tuesday, November 14th. The event takes place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at The Club at the Strand, 5840

Strand Blvd., Naples, FL.

Melissa Congress, Sanibel resident and Vice Chair of the Charitable Foundation of the Islands (CFI), will be recognized as a 2023 Distinguished Volunteer of the Year.

Melissa and her husband Scot lived and worked on Sanibel Island for over 30 years operating Congress Jewelers. Due to Hurricane Ian, their business is now located in the Bell Tower Shops. Growing up in a military family, Melissa learned the importance of serving her community. She managed to balance raising four involved children on Sanibel, handling merchandising at Congress Jewelers and staying involved in causes important to her and the community.

Melissa has served on the boards of the Sanibel School PTA, BIG ARTS, Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife and the Sanibel Community Association. She was also a founding member of Sanibel-Captiva Cares, supporting the Golisano Children's Hospital. Along with being Vice-Chair of CFI, she currently serves on the FISH of Sanibel-Captiva Board and the Advisory Board for Sanibel's Children's Education Center of the Islands (CECI).

After more than a decade of service with CFI, Melissa will end her term as Vice Chair in December. CFI Board Chair Chip Roach said, "Melissa's recognition as the 2023 Distinguished Volunteer truly illustrates the difference she has made on Sanibel, but most especially with CFI."

The Charitable Foundation of the Islands was founded in 2011 to ensure a vibrant, healthy community for the people who live and work on the islands of Sanibel and Captiva. Its mission is to inspire philanthropy, leadership, and collaboration for the vitality of the Island community.

For more information, contact: Dolly Farrell, dfarrell@sancapfi.org, (239) 322-3818



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Photo 1: Melissa Congress (second from left) pictured with Congress Jewelers donation from proceeds of Giving Back Collection featuring Sanibel Strong pendants sold for hurricane relief. Recipients of the “Give Back” Collection include Fort Myers Beach Foundation, SCCF, FISH, Ding Darling, and CFI. Donations to nonprofits now exceed \$33,000.



Photo 2 : Melissa (far right) with the SanCap Chamber announcing grant to help small business recovery on the Island.