



HEARTS OF PALM CENTER

A Capital Campaign
of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

HOPC News & Notes, September 15, 2024

Donor Spotlight

Woody Gardner engaged in a thoughtful discussion about the impact of dedicated community involvement and leadership on creating meaningful change. In this insightful interview, she delves into her extensive personal experience with St. Mark's School, her investment in the Hearts of Palm Center, and her broader commitment to Palm Beach County.

It sounds like you had a significant role at St. Mark's School. Can you tell me a bit about your experience there?

Woody: From the moment I was pregnant with my first son, I pretty much knew it was where my children should be educated. Over the years, I worked in just about every aspect of the school from PA President to Room Mother. When Father Cook joined St. Mark's, there was a remarkable shift. He created a genuine partnership between the school and church allowing them both to thrive in their own right.



“Communities like Riviera Beach often go overlooked. But with local initiatives and the right support, these communities can achieve remarkable things.”

Woody Gardner

How does your involvement with St. Mark's and Hearts of Palm mission fit into your broader approach to community work?

Woody: Father Cook's emphasis on keeping the church's mission independent of the school's fundraising efforts has been a model for how different entities can support each other without overlapping or competing. It's something I strive to emulate in my work as the Chair of First Serve. It's about building a strong foundation and ensuring that every initiative complements rather than detracts from the others.

Can you tell me more about the challenges and successes you've encountered with the work you have done?

Woody: Just like Hearts of Palm, First Serve aims to uplift the community from within, fostering growth from the ground up. It works because you aren't changing the community you are providing the vehicle. Communities like Riviera Beach often go overlooked. But with local initiatives and the right support, like the Hearts of Palm Center, these communities can achieve remarkable things.

Continued.

See the HOPC
video online

