



# HEARTS OF PALM CENTER

A Capital Campaign  
of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

## HOPC News & Notes, September 29, 2024

### Donor Spotlight

In this interview, we hear from Phyllis Bermingham, a dedicated advocate for the Hearts of Palm Center, who reflects on her deep connections to St. George's Church and the broader community it served. With a rich history of involvement dating back to the 1970s, Phyllis describes how her experiences, including her role as an organist and community volunteer, shaped her commitment to fostering spiritual growth and connection.



I understand you are a passionate advocate for the Hearts of Palm Center.

Phyllis: Yes! My decision to commit to the project wasn't instantaneous; it was a journey of prayer and reflection. I've had a strong connection to St. George's for many years.

Can you share more about your experience with St. George's?

Phyllis: In the 70s, we brought our children to Florida every February. Back then, Riviera Beach had a vibrant downtown and that's how I got to know St. George's Church. I vividly remember the hats the women wore to church; there were so many! I didn't realize that tradition until then.

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Phyllis Bermingham

In 2002 I joined St. Mark's, then in 2011, Father Mike invited me to return to St. George's as an organist. I played for almost 10 years until it closed in 2020. I was intimately involved with the community work they provided. I especially enjoyed serving meals after Sunday services. It was so warm and meaningful. It was home.

That sounds wonderful.

Phyllis: It truly was. The pandemic in 2020 changed everything. The church was closed, and many who had regularly attended dispersed. The community the church had created was really diminished.

That's when I began to hear about St. Mark's vision for a new community space. Initially, I was uncertain. Did St. Mark's fully understand what the people's needs were?

Then I saw the video. I was captivated and realized this was something significant. I knew then that Father Cook and the vestry at St. Mark's could bring their vision to reality. I felt compelled to be a part of it - not just to invest, but to commit.

**Continued.**

See the HOPC  
video online



## Interview Cont'd

With your personal experience, what would you like people to know about the community surrounding the future Hearts of Palm Center?

Phyllis: There is such a cross section of humans there. Families, people searching for spiritual growth... God's face is everywhere. The Center can serve them all. This will bring light into the community.

In our congregation, we often hear baptism vows that remind us to see Christ in everyone. We are called to respect the dignity of every living being and work to make the world better. To me, that is the Hearts of Palm Center.

For nine years, St. George's was integral to my spiritual journey. It's difficult to leave that behind. While their future is in my heart, it won't be in my hands, it will be in the hands of capable and loving leadership supported by all of us. That thought brings me back home.

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Phyllis Bermingham

Let's join together as a beacon of faith, hope and light within Riviera Beach.

Would you join these HOPC donors today?

Please contact Charlotte Pelton,  
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[church.stmarkspb.org/hearts-of-palm-center-campaign](http://church.stmarkspb.org/hearts-of-palm-center-campaign)

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