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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

***Student-led grant-making pilot project in the Glades benefits community***

BELLE GLADE, Fla. (September 20, 2019) - Through a unique grant-making pilot project, local government and high school students have come together to strengthen the Glades community.

Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County increased its investment in Belle Glade, South Bay and Pahokee through shared leadership with the Student ACES organization. Through a competitive bid process, 12 teens created the Glades Student Grant-Making Association (GSGA) and, with CSC's funding and guidance, awarded \$35,000 in grants to seven local nonprofits. The money will help support a healthier, more youth-centered community.

The Student ACES Glades team, along with Nikki Bynum, Principal Consultant Martin-Bynum Consulting Group, worked hard to ensure the process was student led from start to finish! GSGA met every week over the course of four months to plan and craft the project. And students were paid for their work. After a community survey and listening tour, GSGA identified three important areas they wanted grant proposals for: Trust, Respect and Safety. GSGA then hosted a grant information session to announce to the community what they are looking for, and officially opened the grant for proposals.

GSGA received 19 proposals and – after a comprehensive, multi-faceted review – the team selected seven. The proposals selected were: Rico's Scholarship; Balanced Living Mentorship; Back to Basics; Ella's Closet; In Jacobs Shoes; First Haitian Baptist Church Youth & Children Development Center; and Families First.

Throughout the process, GSGA students were able to:

- Assess the assets and needs within their own community
- Make connections with multiple stakeholders
- Gain understanding of the grant-making process
- Build individual and collective capacity over time
- Learn more about civic responsibility
- Participate in broad-base relationship building toward affecting change

This initiative taught youth valuable lessons about thinking outside the box and working together as a community.

"I learned that you have to always be prepared to back your arguments and viewpoints," says Ramiya Johnson, a 11th-grader at Glades Central High School.

Frankie Burgess from Pahokee High School says "it is great to be part of the GSGA team. I am learning things I would never learned at school and it will help me in life."

"I am grateful for the opportunity and confidence in us," he says.

**Grantees, and the media, are invited to an open house and special check presentation at 6:15pm, Sept. 24, 2019, at The Student ACES Center, 915 S. Main St. Belle Glade FL 33430. To RSVP contact, Rebecca Tucker, at [rebecca@studentacesforleadership.com](mailto:rebecca@studentacesforleadership.com), or call 561-309-0306.**

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***About Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County***

Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County – a special-purpose government established by Palm Beach County voters in 1986 and reauthorized in 2014 – provides leadership, funding, services and research on behalf of the county's children so they grow up healthy, safe and strong. For more information, visit [www.cscpb.org](http://www.cscpb.org) or contact Shana Cooper, Public Information Officer, at [shana.cooper@cscpb.org](mailto:shana.cooper@cscpb.org) or 561.374.7570.

***About Student ACES***

Student ACES founded in 2013, is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing character education programs, mentoring, community service and life skills for high school student athletes. The organization is impacting the lives of students who so desperately need it. Student ACES' focus is to inspire, train and mentor a community of Student ACES who exemplify leadership traits in athletics, community service and education. The inspiration for Student ACES is derived from a deep desire to see every student achieve a foundation of honor, character and integrity that will permanently generate positive outcomes in their schools and for the next generation. Student ACES relies solely on contributions. Students participate in the organization's programs at no cost to them. For more information or to donate, please visit: <https://student-aces.networkforgood.com/projects/51676-support-student-aces>