



Cookie sale, Woman's Club grant have helped to fund Mercabo

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BY MARCY SHORTUSE – In just a scant few weeks, the Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Association has achieved something that is virtually unheard of in Boca Grande: solidarity.

That word was used by Boca Grande Woman's Club Parliamentarian Camille Williams when describing the outpouring of support for the GICIA's pending purchase of the Mercabo Property, located where the Boca Grande Causeway meets Gasparilla Road.

"I've not seen everyone come together in community solidarity like this," she said.

The Woman's Club voted this week to grant the GICIA \$125,000 toward the property purchase. With an anonymous donor matching program in place, that amount turned into a \$250,000 donation.

"We decided this was a critical situation," Williams said. "In past years we have contributed \$50,000 to the GICIA Land Conservancy Fund, \$100,000 to the Boca Grande Health Clinic, \$100,000 to the GICIA Bike Path and \$50,000 to The Island

School. It is our policy to support projects benefitting Boca Grande, and we have historically made a difference in the needs of this community. I encourage every individual and non-profit group on the island to donate to this cause. One day in the near future we will look back at this moment in time as a watershed, when our community showed great civic pride and solidarity in preserving this critical property.”

The Woman’s Club wasn’t the only group contributing to the cause, though. Children from The Island School spent one of their afternoons after school baking cookies with Kristin Levanovich from The Topsy Cake Company, which they sold on Sunday evening at the lighting of the community Christmas tree.

They raised \$404 that night, for a total of \$808 when you figure in the anonymous matching donor.

Every little bit counts.



POSTED BY **MARCY SHORTUSE**

Marcy Shortuse is the editor of the Boca Beacon, and has been with the paper since 2007. She is also editor of the Boca Beacon's sister publication, Gasparilla Magazine. She has more than 20 years of experience writing and editing local newspapers and is originally from the Chicago area.

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