



THE SUNRISE CITY
FORT PIERCE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
AND CITY COMMISSION
Florida

May 17, 2021

Florida Division of Cultural Affairs
R.A. Gray Building
500 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Dear Sir/Madam:

It is my pleasure to submit this letter in support of the Manatee Observation and Education Center (MOEC), endorsing its grant application to the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs for general operating support for 2022-2023.

MOEC is a fixture in our community as St. Lucie County's first non-profit, environmental learning center – teaching, guiding and inspiring stewardship of the Indian River Lagoon and its fragile inhabitants, including the Florida manatee. With the visionary partnership of the Florida Inland Navigational District (FIND), Main Street Fort Pierce, City of Fort Pierce, Fort Pierce Utilities Authority, Indian River State College and local business and community donors, MOEC became a cultural community gathering place and a catalyst for ecological education. Today, MOEC continues as an anchor in the economic revitalization of Fort Pierce, contributing to the local economy through cultural eco-tourism and attracting visitors from all of the world.

Funding from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs will enhance MOEC's proven ability to engage our community in environmental education. MOEC has shown their dedication to environmental education, and stayed active even during the most challenging of times, with innovative online programming such as the Daily Manatee and Manatee Weekly, which were celebrated and shared widely for their fun and informative content during social distancing. MOEC has also supported the Fort Pierce efforts to beautify and improve the downtown area by bringing a beautiful manatee mural to the seawall on Moore's Creek, adopting A.E. Backus Avenue and hosting monthly cleanups, and installing a "living docks" oyster reef on the dock pilings in Moore's Creek which will filter as much as 85,000 gallons of Moore's Creek water per day. Best of all, MOEC remains accessible to all who enjoy historic downtown Fort Pierce and its waterfront.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to express support for, and the desire to promote this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Linda Hudson
Mayor