



Green & Gold Foundation of Lake Wales, Inc.

“B” Street Community Service Center

The Green & Gold Story

For more than thirty years, two classmates, while traveling from various destinations, would meet in their hometown of Lake Wales, Florida, to discuss how to give back to the community in a meaningful way. Oftentimes, during these varied and stimulating discussions, other home folks would join-in and elaborate on how to improve the Historic Black Community and its people. These sessions took place with individuals and local organizations over a period extending more than thirty years. Everyone recognized that there were community needs, but very few had substantial solutions nor adequate funding to resolve such a quandary, but “Chick” and “Hawk” as they are so affectionately called by their peers, never gave up on their dream and vision for their community.

After many years of working in professional careers, Clinton Horne (an executive for Texaco in New York City) and Albert Hawkins, Jr. (an elementary school principal in New Jersey) decided to retire and move back home (Lake Wales) and do volunteer work in the community as a beginning toward creating a positive image for change. During the final two years prior to Clinton’s retirement, plans and ideas to help enhance the community became more focused and detailed. Even though Albert retired two years later than Clinton, their plans continued forming with written correspondence or by telephone. Also, during this period of planning, refinement, and further discussions, they engaged a local educator and long-standing friend, Jerome Mack, a retired Principal of the Polk County School System for forty years. He has been a pivotal part and partner in moving community needs and services forward. Mr. Mack, as he is called affectionately in the community, was a tremendous help in providing pertinent information in regards to Metropolitan Lake Wales. While spending his life and career here, Mr. Mack has been involved at every level in the Lake Wales Community.

With this nucleus of three in place, “The Roosevelt Recreation & Social Club, Inc.” (RRSC) was created, with the motto: “People Helping People through Positive Programs.” Members of this group are comprised of graduates or attendees of Roosevelt High School along with their family and friends. Initially, the RRSC was a For-Profit Corporation, but after being selected to manage the “B” Street Community Center, the managing agent realized the need to form a new Non-Profit Corporation, “The Green and Gold Foundation, Inc.,” (GGF) which became the managing entity for the Center.

The implementation of the community enhancement plan started in a small office in the Walker’s Building at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and “C” Street. After a brief stay at that location, the operation moved across “C” Street to another Walker’s building, 227 Lincoln Avenue, known locally as the old Wade Store. The second location provided much more space than the initial one. Both locations were poorly maintained and violated many of the City’s codes. However, through our parent organization, “The Roosevelt Recreation & Social Club, Inc.,” we were able to refurbish each location, thereby eliminating many of the code violations at costs exceeding \$10,000. After providing several community services at 227 Lincoln Avenue for approximately two years, the City Commission selected the “Roosevelt Recreation & Social Club, Inc.” group as the “B” Street Community Service Center Managing Agent. This initiative took place effective, January 1, 2001.



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Immediately, after accepting the offer to manage the “B” Street Center, we began to partnership with many of the social and civic organizations such as the Lake Wales Care Center, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lake Wales Arts Council, Unity-In-Community, and many other groups. It was decided that in order to provoke a positive change in the local area (i.e., Northwest Area), we had to be a part of the total community including the City of Lake Wales. With that purpose in mind, we were very strong proponents of the Chamber of Commerce’s Charter School initiative, from the beginning of the overall process. Mr. Mack and Mr. Horne served on the Charter School Steering Committee as well as various schools SAC committees.

As managing agent for the “B” Street facility, we are responsible for day-to-day activities; such as maintenance, scheduling, security, facilitating, supervising programs, and servicing others in the use of the center. The “B” Street Center currently serves as a beacon for the Northwest Community. For example, the center provides space and services for many individuals, groups, non-profit entities, and resident agencies (NAACP, American Legion, Roosevelt Alumni Association, and the Green & Gold Foundation, Inc.). Various activities take place regularly on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis at the center by the aforementioned groups. These activities include but are not limited to senior citizens nutrition and physical fitness, After-School Enrichment and Tutoring, Computer Training Classes (both youth and adults), Public Benefits, Group Dancing and Social Events.

In view of the numerous activities that have been listed, we continue to operate without a secure funding source. Even though we are no longer receiving funding from the City, we, the volunteer staff and the Green & Gold Foundation who handle most of the programmatic activities, are dedicated to making the community a better place to reside with whatever funding we can secure.