

CROWLEY MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER INC

Initiative: Equal Access Immersive Outdoor Classroom

FAC: Environment & Recreation

Organization Mission Statement: To facilitate the enjoyment and understanding of Southwest Florida's natural and cultural history, to foster responsible stewardship and promote environmental awareness.

Nonprofit's Description of its Organization and its History of Impact:

CMNC is situated on 191 ecologically sensitive acres in east Sarasota. Founded in 1976 by an agriculture teacher, Jasper Crowley, the goal of the organization was to provide a natural and agricultural area for people to visit and learn. Primarily, the target audience was children. Using unique, immersive and hands on techniques, the experiences it provides create memories and foster a deep sense of personal connection to Florida's natural and cultural history. Over the years it has developed educational opportunities in sustainable organic agricultural practices, birding and other species inventories, a folk school for the fading homesteading arts including canning, soap making, candle making, basket weaving, spinning, knitting, weaving, crochet, sewing, wood working, gardening and more. It also offers classes in health and mindfulness that rekindle a human connection to nature through photography, yoga, mindfulness practices and wilderness survival. These opportunities are offered to people of all ages and experience levels. The Florida Pioneer Life program is its most popular. Offered to students from Pre-K through high school this fieldtrip sees thousands of school children per year. It believes that no child should be denied this amazing opportunity so no schools are turned away based on an inability to pay.

Impact100 SRQ's Description of the Initiative:

The Impact100 SRQ grant will **FUND** the construction of an equal access educational boardwalk that will replace the previous boardwalk that was destroyed during hurricane Irma. The entire \$101,000 will be paid to the contractor and used to fund the costs associated with the construction of the boardwalk including materials, labor, and dump fees. An engineering firm has offered to donate the engineering services.

The Initiative's **IMPACT** on the community will be that the boardwalk will allow Crowley Museum & Nature Center to access their property's swamp area and a safe view of several ecosystems, habitats and diverse wildlife and resume their programming. The boardwalk will provide equal access for differently abled

students and visitors who otherwise would not have this opportunity. The programming will include immersive, hands-on educational guided tours, scheduled events, classes, and self-guided options offered to the public and field trips for K-12 grade students. The educational programs will address environmental and ecological subjects while immersing the participant in nature to foster a sense of connection to the subject material. Natural science classes will be offered for adult learners. Self-guided tours will be available for the visiting public. Nearly 75% of all schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties participate in the field trips. It is anticipated each year thousands of children and adults will visit the boardwalk.

The Initiative will be **SUSTAINED** in several ways. Using the proper materials, the structure will last 30 years or more. The Crowley Museum & Nature Center dedicated volunteers will be available to do routine maintenance. The recent addition of a sawmill will enable them to mill maintenance lumber. In addition, they collect fees for public admission and membership. Upon opening the boardwalk to the public, Crowley Museum & Nature Center will launch a dedication program for memorial and honor giving. They also will continue to request donations at fundraisers to help offset costs of projects, maintenance, and title 1 school services. Finally, due to the ecological importance of the land, Crowley Museum & Nature Center recently received a conservation easement through Sarasota County, ensuring that their 191 acres of natural land are conserved forever.

Please use our SRQ 5Q when you are reviewing these executive summaries.

Q1. Is the Initiative clearly defined?

Q2. Is the Initiative viable?

Q3. Is the Initiative sustainable?

Q4. Is the Initiative going to positively Impact the community?

Q5. Are we being good stewards of the dollars we have been entrusted?