



# 2017

Annual Report  
+ Irma Impact







## *Our Mission*

To change lives in a spiritual environment that is both compassionate and disciplined as we provide housing for the homeless, food for the needy, and comfort for the addicted and suffering.

## *Our Vision*

To become a model agency to provide services and resources to the homeless, hungry, and addicted while seeking to expand the capacity to meet present and future needs in the most effective and efficient manner.

## *Our Beliefs and Principles*

### **HELPFUL**

We are called to care for “the least of these.” We are helpful by providing food, shelter, clothing, and care for the sick and by visiting those in jail.

### **HEALING**

We work to provide healing words, resources, and structure to all who come to us. The homeless, addicted, mentally ill, and people wounded by life’s circumstances need the opportunity to find healing. We work to ensure this is a safe, healing atmosphere for all.

### **EXCELLENCE**

We strive for the best business and ministry practices in every area of the organization. In our personal lives, we are expected to live a life that is blameless and carry ourselves with integrity.

### **GOD-HONORING**

Everything that we do is to reflect the knowledge that God cares for all who come to us. Customers in our stores, residents in our programs, volunteers, staff, and anyone else should see the goodness of God’s blessings in all that we do.

# Vann Ellison

Another year has come and gone and I believe 2017 will stand out in our minds for quite some time. Along with all the regular successes and challenges a normal year brings, Hurricane Irma made quite the impact on everyone's lives here in Southwest Florida. But with these exceptionally difficult moments come greater opportunities for God's providence to become evident to greater audience, and for that, we are thankful!

I enjoy history, especially stories about World War II. Winston Churchill, during the first ten months of World War II, famously said, "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." Our battle with Hurricane Irma is over, and we are glad. However, our everyday battle at St. Matthew's House isn't against storms or flesh and blood, but against powers of this world and evil. We know the men, women, and children in our care ultimately face a very personal and spiritual battle. We will never give in and will always lead the fight against homelessness, poverty, and substance abuse.

We thank God for His provision and for leading the way as we continue to navigate our mission to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and hope for the addicted.



Vann Ellison, President / CEO  
St. Matthew's House



**WATCH  
ONLINE**

Watch an Introduction to  
St. Matthew's House online:  
[www.stmattewshouse.org/intro](http://www.stmattewshouse.org/intro)

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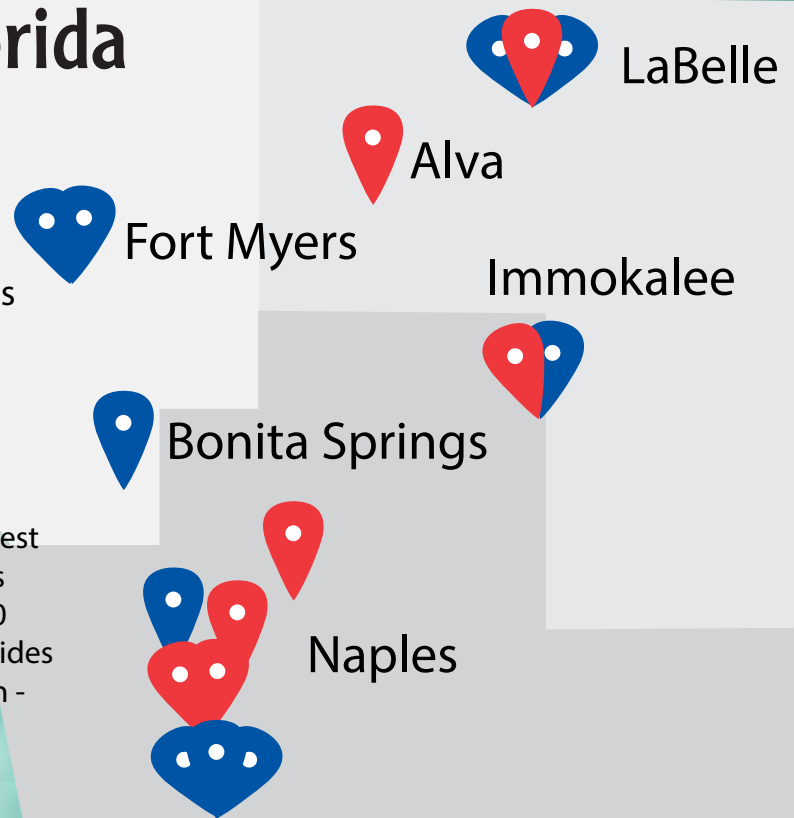
# St. Matthew's House Across Southwest Florida

**St. Matthew's House is a growing nonprofit in Southwest Florida serving the homeless, hungry, and addicted.** Established in Naples as a soup kitchen, St. Matthew's House extends into Fort Myers, growing cities such as Bonita Springs, and rural communities like Immokalee and Alva.

With over 30 years of experience, St. Matthew's House has become a trusted refuge within Southwest Florida for those who seek it. Our shelters in Naples and Immokalee, alongside Justin's Place, house 400 residents each night and the feeding ministry provides over 500,000 meals a year to men, women, children - whoever is in need.

## **St. Matthew's House is more than a shelter.**

Five social enterprises created and run by St. Matthew's House provide hundreds of local jobs and quality services. Take a look at all we offer and think about St. Matthew's House next time you're in need of a car wash, caterer, a hot coffee and more!



## Ministry Centers

**Alva:** Jill's Place Retreat Center

**LaBelle:** Justin's Place Recovery Program

**Immokalee:** Immokalee Friendship House

**Naples:** Wolfe Apartments  
Justin's Place Recovery Program  
Feeding Ministry  
Campbell Lodge (Naples Shelter)

## Social Enterprises

**LaBelle:** Port LaBelle Inn & Conference Center  
Sprout Catering

**Immokalee:** Thrift Store

**Fort Myers:** Thrift Store  
Café M25

**Bonita Springs:** Thrift Store

**Naples:** Thrift Store  
Boutique Thrift Store  
Café M25  
Car Wash and Detailing Center  
Delicious by Design Catering

**Get involved!**  
**Visit [stmatthewhouse.org](http://stmatthewhouse.org)**  
**to learn more**





# Ministry Centers

For over 30 years, the mission of St. Matthew's House has been to help those who, through circumstances in their lives, need a hand up. All of the ministries and programs at St. Matthew's House are case managed, through love and discipline, to address the underlying issues that prevent the clients from achieving independence and reconnection with God, their families and their sense of purpose.





# Justin's Place Recovery Program



**Graduates of  
Justin's Place  
Recovery  
Program pose  
for a class  
picture.**



Learn more about  
Justin's Place online:  
[www.stmatthewshouse.org/  
justinsplace](http://www.stmatthewshouse.org/justinsplace)

In 2010, St. Matthew's House opened the doors to the Justin's Place Recovery Program. Justin's Place was launched in response to the need for long-term solutions for the struggles faced by our community's most at-risk individuals. Our residential treatment facilities provide life's essentials, so that struggling men and women can focus on recovery.

**In 2017, we held three Justin's Place Recovery Program graduations. We now have over 370 graduates from the recovery program.**

Graduates of Justin's Place have been restored to their families, attend college, seek advanced degrees, contribute to society, and continue with a positive life that gives back to the community. Amidst a national drug epidemic with people dying in record numbers and incarceration levels increasing, Justin's Place continues to provide the community a program with proven results in helping people escape chronic poverty, homelessness, lack of education, and substance abuse.





**I knew I had to do something different with my life.**

**I grew with a single mother and my brother.** The early years of life were nice, my mom did everything she could to provide for us boys. She worked two jobs but still made sure we got up for school, and took us back and forth to football practices. I started going to church at a young age, and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

But as time went on I started to turn away, and rebel. Addictions took my focus from God, family, college and eventually the Arena Football League. Then while incarcerated for some time, I started to seek the Lord again.

September 28, 2015, I boarded a bus with intentions to move to Florida and make a better life. But still, I brought myself with me, old behaviors, attitudes and dependent on others. After losing several jobs, and ending up in dead ends, I became homeless.

After several belligerent and miserable days, I was broken and desperately willing to do anything to make it out of that pit. I knew that God had created me to do more than be a drunken washed-up beach bum.

One day a young man showed up on the beach evangelizing to the homeless. He carried no judgment, just an open heart. Through him I entered Justin's Place, and this program has given me a life I never would've imagined.

Today, I have brothers in Christ with whom I have built friendships with. Relationships I believe will last a lifetime. Today, I am a warrior for Jesus Christ, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. I serve the living God, and he is with me as I speak. He's guided me through obstacles that seemed impossible.

## Joseph's Story

# Sarah's Story

## **When I was born both my parents were drug addicts and alcoholics.**

We lived in a trailer park in Williamstown, New Jersey, where I was exposed to a lot of that life-style. From the beginning, I lived and operated in fear. When I was 7, and my sister was born, my grandparents took us out of the house to live with them. I started having behavioral issues in school and suffered from depression and anxiety.

By the age of 15, I attempted suicide several times and was experimenting with drugs and alcohol. At 18, I was pregnant with my daughter Ariel, my drug use almost caused me to lose her.

At 19 my addiction spiraled out of control causing me to lose my home, my family and my daughter. I started working in the sex slave industry to provide for myself. I was homeless on the streets of Camden, New Jersey and prostituting for over a year. After going missing or over a week, and getting gang raped, I was hospitalized.

My mother then brought me to Florida to get help. That's where she found Justin's Place. Since entering the program, I have given my life to Christ. I started finding my worth in God and he has been restoring my family and my life. If I didn't find Justin's Place I would have ended up dead. This program has saved my life and given me a purpose. I love myself today.



**“This program has saved my life and given me a purpose. I love myself today.”**



Fellowship hall at  
Jill's Place Retreat Center.

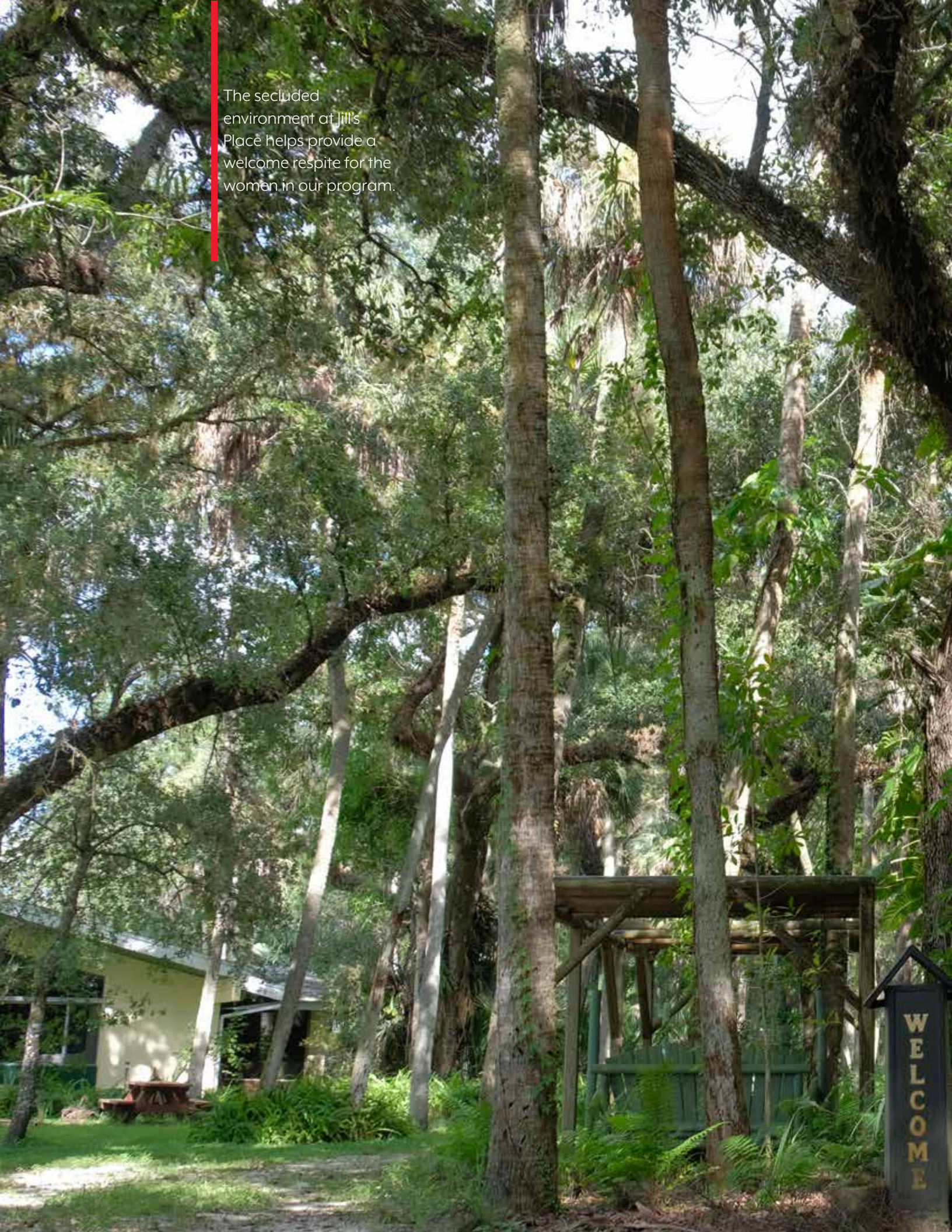


# Jill's Place Retreat Center

Jill's Place Retreat Center in Alva, Florida, is the permanent home of the Justin's Place Recovery Program for women.

This 11-acre property has four buildings with the potential to expand. This property continues to provide ample opportunity for our seed-to-table agriculture development plan. With the ability to grow enough produce to supply our catering enterprises in addition to selling the abundance of the harvest in the local marketplace, the program would offer a bridge for local churches and educational organizations looking for a way to get involved in the work Justin's Place is doing.



A full-page photograph of a serene, wooded environment. Tall, slender trees with light-colored bark and dense green foliage dominate the scene. Sunlight filters through the leaves, creating dappled shadows on the ground. In the lower-left background, a portion of a yellow building with a dark roof is visible. To the right, a wooden pergola structure is partially obscured by trees. In the bottom right corner, a dark signpost with the word "WELCOME" in yellow capital letters stands. A thin red vertical line is positioned on the left side of the image, to the left of the text.

The secluded environment at Jill's Place helps provide a welcome respite for the women in our program.

WELCOME







# Transitional Housing

We operate a 104-bed shelter and a 46-unit transitional housing complex in Naples, and a 44-bed shelter in Immokalee that serve men, women, and families. All of our facilities use a structured program that requires residents to adhere to guidelines that prohibit drug or alcohol use, to work with case managers on plans for transition to independence, and to complete daily chores.



Last year, St. Matthew's House provided over 6,000 bags of grocery to people in need.

## Feeding Ministry

Our ability to serve 513,000 meals and distribute over 6,000 bags of groceries last year was made possible by our volunteers, donors, and sponsors.

St. Matthew's House is committed to assisting those who have a home but are living paycheck to paycheck, often at or below poverty level. We operate a fully-stocked food pantry located in Naples filled with nonperishable grocery items generously donated by area businesses, churches, supermarkets and individuals.



# Zach's Story

**My life before coming to Justin's Place was a repetitive blur of bad decisions.**



**“I am happy to be sober today and to feel like part of something.”**

Every day, I would wake up and have to manipulate whatever situation I could to earn money for more drugs. I would wake up again and repeat this process. There were only a handful of things that I was doing that could be considered honorable. I was digging a deeper hole every day, unaware of the people I was hurting.

What brought me to Justin's Place? Simply put, prayer brought me here. For the first time in years, I prayed.

This time the difference was that I was not trying to force my will in the situations. Instead, I listened to what God was telling me. It was clear that I had to sacrifice a year of my freedom in order to have a hope for a better future.

Now that I am living for the Lord, I have a lot of gratitude. Because of this gratitude, I am able to consider other people's needs before my own. A healthy relationship with the Lord has truly helped me to renew my body, mind, and spirit.

Failure is failure, success is success, and there is always a lesson to be learned. Despite my failures or successes, today I live for the Lord's approval, with a hope to live in his eternal kingdom. I try not to look too far ahead.

Right now, I am happy to have a healthy relationship with my family. I am happy to be sober today and to feel like part of something. I hope to continue helping others and maybe someday have a family.



# Social Enterprises

With six social enterprises and counting, these businesses are vital to St. Matthew's House. Not only do they provide a steady source of revenue to fund our staff so every dollar donated can go directly to programming, these social enterprises provide priceless, real-life work experience for the men and women in our care.









# Thrift Stores

The first of our social enterprise ventures are our thrift stores. With six locations from Ft. Myers on through South Naples, the St. Matthew's Thrift stores are our most well-known enterprise within the community.

With a fleet of over 10 trucks and a talented crew of professional drivers and movers, thrift is a well-oiled machine! An average day brings our dispatch call center 170 calls, with truck drivers making over 20,000 stops a year. They are unloaded, stored, and organized in our warehouse before being distributed to our different retail locations.



Last year, St. Matthew's House was again awarded two Gold SWFL Choice awards. It was an honor to be recognized in our community as the people's choice for thrift stores.









# Café M25

In 2015, by partnering with Catalyst Kitchens, we were given exclusive access to Starbucks products as a nonprofit. Through this partnership, we opened two Café M25 locations - one in Naples and one in Fort Myers. These two cafés provide a fast-paced, unique environment to train men and women for the food service industry.

In addition to serving Starbucks coffee, both cafés offer breakfast and lunch items made fresh daily by Delicious by Design.



Award-winning Café M25 proudly serves the Starbucks brand. Many of the drinks you enjoy at Starbucks are faithfully created by our baristas.



St. Matthew's House partnered with Catalyst Kitchens and Starbucks because of their commitment to breaking the cycle of joblessness, poverty, and hunger.







“Thanks to Justin’s Place, I really have a much brighter future.”

**Before coming to Justin’s Place, I was completely broken.** I was depressed and emotionally unstable. I was on state probation for drug related charges. I didn’t make it long before I relapsed on probation and facing years in prison.

I broke down and got on my knees crying out to God asking him to give me another chance. I told God through prayer that I would never touch another drug again if he could just keep me out of prison and give me one last chance.

Well, somehow my probation officer gave me one last chance with my freedom, she told me as long as I went to Justin’s Place for a year I wouldn’t go to jail.

I called Justin’s Place and they said there was a month long waiting list. I was scared because I didn’t have the time to wait. I just kept praying and within days a bed opened up for me. I have been in the program for a little over nine months now. My life has completely changed. My relationship with God is much stronger than it ever was. My family actually talks to me now. Thanks to Justin’s Place, I really have a much brighter future.

## Rob’s Story

# Port LaBelle Inn & Conference





# Center



With 49 acres of land, and 44,000 square feet of building space, the Port LaBelle Inn & Conference center has provided St. Matthew's House significant opportunity for growth since it's purchase in 2014.

This beautiful property has facilitated the maturity of Justin's Place Recovery Program for Men into a leading model for residential discipleship programing. In addition to the rich and expansive landscape's ability to provide a variety of produce and agriculture, it offers a rare quietude for the hundreds of men seeking recovery and restoration each year. The men of Justin's Place have the opportunity to be still and experience the quiet strength of God.

That restful experience is not limited to those in the program. Port LaBelle Inn and Conference Center hosted a number of events over the past year, such as luncheons, business meetings, conferences, and seminars.

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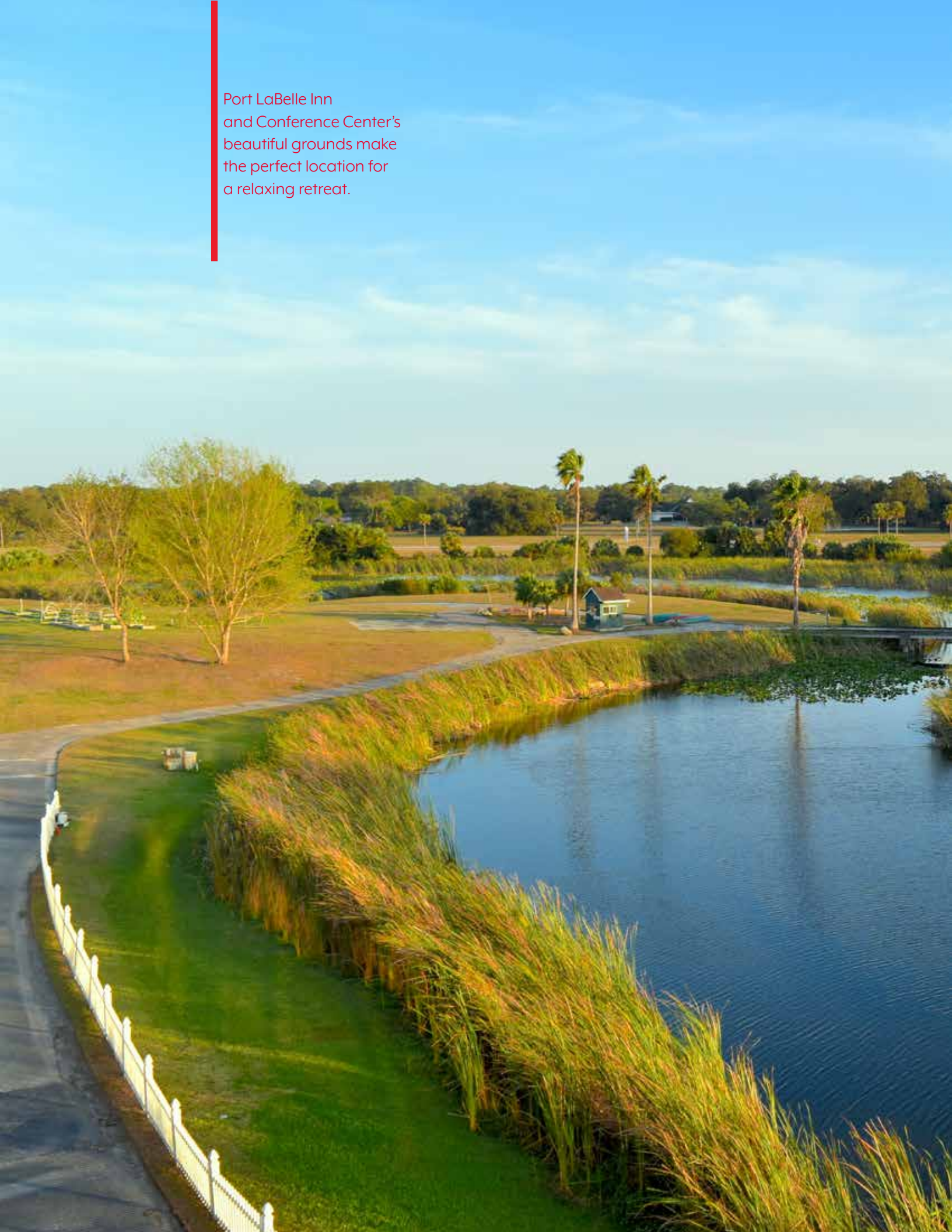
The men from Justin's Place Recovery Program gather every morning for sunrise prayer.

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Nestled on banks of an oxbow on the Caloosahatchee River, the Port LaBelle Inn & Conference Center serves groups for retreats, conferences, or seminars.



Port LaBelle Inn  
and Conference Center's  
beautiful grounds make  
the perfect location for  
a relaxing retreat.







# Monique's Story

**I was in such despair I didn't know which way to turn.** I didn't know what to do or where to go. I was so lost I began to believe I was going to die an addict. I was numb. I felt used up and I had nothing to offer life, not even my own I felt as if I was damaged goods.

I was no good to anyone, I needed help. I felt as if I was damaged goods. I felt there was no help for me. I was in a place I had never been; helpless, scared and hopeless. I felt dirty and useless.

I lived like an animal and I felt I didn't have a way out. I was desperate. I couldn't think right. I wanted to go away; but where? I didn't know. I was miserable, confused, and lived in fear that someone was going to hurt or kill me. I felt like people were watching me, that I was losing my mind. I was scum of the earth.

Then I discovered Justin's Place and God. This place, these people, they saved my life. I am forever grateful to this program.



**“I am forever grateful to this program.”**



Program  
graduates  
learn marketable  
skills in our  
social  
enterprises.



Opening in late August of 2016, the St. Matthew's House Car Wash and Detail Center offers auto cleaning and detailing with a hand car wash adjacent to the thrift store at 2601 Airport Road South.

The social enterprise's, equipment, cleaning and polishing products, and training were donated by Simoniz. The car wash and detail center allows a thrift store customer to have their car vacuumed and waxed while enjoying a coffee at Café M25 and shopping at the Naples flagship store.

In 2017, the Car Wash & Detail Center was awarded the silver SWFL Choice Award.



# Car Wash & Detail Center

# Delicious by Design



We are proud to offer the full spectrum of catering services, from backyard barbecues to lobster and caviar, ice cream to ice sculptures.

Whether you're planning a cocktail reception, wedding, a private dinner party, or a luncheon, we will work with you to design the perfect spread for your event!

delicious by design



Our team brings passion and attention to every detail. Our desserts will add the perfect touch to your catering experience.



Developed as a social enterprise to support the efforts of St. Matthew's House in Naples, Florida, Delicious by Design provides food and service that far exceeds your expectations.

An award-winning professional catering team will work together with you to provide an excellent catering experience. We focus on making clients look good and feel special during their event.

We offer everything from backyard barbecues to lobster and caviar; and we cater to events such as cocktail receptions, weddings, elegant dinners, themed buffets, and luncheons.

All proceeds benefit St. Matthew's House.



*Patrick Biel, Groom  
Southern Vintage  
Wedding Reception*  
"I can't thank  
[Delicious by Design]  
enough! We had so  
many compliments  
on the food and your  
staff! You guys are  
fantastic!"

Sprout Catering creates  
desserts to satisfy your  
sweet tooth.







Chef Jason Boyer leads  
the team in LaBelle.

# Sprout Catering

Established in 2015 as a social enterprise to support the efforts of St. Matthew's House, Sprout Catering provides the freshest food possible to its catering customers in Southwest Florida.

Located at the Port LaBelle Inn & Conference Center, we are blessed with 48 acres of beautiful land, giving us the space to grow our own food on property.

Our vision is to reach as many people as possible in our area with fresh and delicious food. We've partnered with ECHO to help us practice sustainable farming with 63 people receiving agriculture training in 2016.

Our head chef, Jason Boyer, leads our catering kitchen in LaBelle.







Justin's Place Recovery  
Program graduation  
ceremony at Moorings  
Presbyterian Church in  
Naples.







# Irma Impact

When your “365 day” job is feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless, a hurricane like Irma opens your doors and hearts to many new opportunities to serve. And like the brave first responders who manned the firehouses and hospitals, St. Matthew’s House became home for many of our staff, who told their families to do their best, while they manned their stations, caring for those who had lost so much.







Residents of Immokalee  
receive hurricane aid from  
St. Matthew's House.



In our thirty years of operating Collier County's only homeless shelters we have come to understand how fragile lives can be. A hurricane makes that point with profound fury, crashing down on everything in its path.

Irma arrived just as a team from St. Matthew's House returned from helping victims of Hurricane Harvey in Houston. No time to rest – we had to get ready for the opportunity to help our own friends and neighbors survive this nightmare.

The weeks following Irma, we served many thousands of meals at our shelters. Power company workers from all over the country bunked side by side with folks whose homes were ravaged. Our Immokalee Friendship House shelter received shipment after shipment of food, water and relief items, which were distributed to families who had lost everything.

In Naples, aid distribution centers were established and hundreds of folks came through every day for food, water and hygiene products. Our Justin's Place Recovery

Members of the St.  
Matthew's House  
team evacuated  
to local hurricane  
shelters during Irma.





Justin's Place Recovery  
Program members  
cleaned up homes  
flooded by Irma's storm  
surge.



clients loaded into vans and traveled to the hardest hit victims in East Naples and Everglades City, to help wherever it was needed. Delicious by Design, our Naples catering company, began feeding first responders and FEMA representatives alongside our clients within the first two hours after the storm, and continuously since.

Perhaps the most remarkable element we've seen is the generosity of our local residents and businesses, and also groups of volunteers from states as far away as Indiana and Tennessee. They arrived at our doors without notice, and asked to be put to work. St. Matthew's House does not receive government funding.

Our twelve locations, over 200 employees, and over 2,000 volunteers serve the community, and operate social enterprises (thrift shops, catering, car wash, coffee shops, and a hotel and conference center) that provide both revenue and jobs that enable us to operate. And generous donations from the community, every penny of which goes to client services, rounds out our revenue.

While we have lost over \$500,000 of this revenue, and many of our facilities sustained damage, we look back at Hurricane Irma with immense pride. Our dedicated team rose to the occasion, and our loving community stood beside us, with the incredible support and dedication for which we are eternally grateful.

**“Apart from God and Justin’s Place program, I would be dead today.”**



## **Brittany’s Story**

**I grew up in a wonderful home with two wonderful present parents in my life.** At a very young age, prior to elementary school, there were some traumatic events that helped to create a real fear and phobia of being alone or away from my parents for any length of time. It really controlled my life growing up.

At the age of 13, I began hanging out with some kids who were a bad influence on my life. It started with alcohol and cigarettes and progressed on into high school and beyond to much stronger and destructive substances.

At the age of 14, I was resuscitated from alcohol poisoning. By the age of 17, I had dropped out of school, entered three different 30-day treatment programs to no avail.

I began running with a man who introduced me to much more catastrophic substances, which, for two plus years, caused me to do so much damage to my life and family. My father shipped me down to my mother’s home in Florida due to the fact that my life had been threatened by members of the drug cartel.

It didn’t take long for me to end up on the streets again. I lost everything, absolutely everything, and I was so very broken. I remember getting a hotel room, telling family members and friends I loved them, and I planned my suicide. I was delivered to NCH that night, dead on arrival, but somehow, God had a plan for me to make it this time.

My father managed to get a court order for me to enter Justin’s Place Women’s Program. I thought, “This is my second chance. Thank you God!”

Apart from God and Justin’s Place program, I would be dead today, so I want to thank all those who made it possible for me to have a new and free life.



# Financial Report

## EVERY DOLLAR DONATED IN 2017 WENT TO LIFE- SAVING PROGRAMS

St. Matthew's House is committed to being excellent stewards to the financial gifts given to the ministry. In FY2017, just under \$5,000,000 of contributions (general) were donated with just over \$5.2 million dollars spent on our life-changing and life-saving programs. We continue to commit every that dollar given in contributions will go to program needs.

**\$4,896,844**

**total contributions received in 2017**

**\$5,254,083**

**total spent on programs in 2017**

**\$9,064,383**

**total social enterprise revenue in 2017**

*For more financial information,  
please see our 990 online at  
[www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).*





### **ST. MATTHEW'S HOUSE**

2001 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34112  
(239) 774-0500  
[www.stmatthewshouse.org](http://www.stmatthewshouse.org)

### **IMMOKALEE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE**

602 West Main Street  
Immokalee, FL 34142  
(239) 657-4090

### **JUSTIN'S PLACE RECOVERY PROGRAM**

2691 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34112  
(239) 774-0340

### **THRIFT STORE LOCATIONS**

2601 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34112

1115 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34104

25091 Bernwood Drive  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135


### **CAFÉ M25 LOCATIONS**

2601 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34112

3954 Broadway  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

### **PORT LABELLE INN AND CONFERENCE CENTER**

1563 Oxbow Drive  
LaBelle, FL 33935  
(863) 675-4411



1520 Lake Trafford Road  
Immokalee, FL 34142

630 West Main Street  
Immokalee, FL 34142

3954 Broadway  
Fort Myers, FL 33901