

## **GARDEN CLUB DONATIONS SUPPORT LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The Punta Gorda Garden Club, an active group of 100 members, has long been known for its efforts to promote beautification, conservation and environmental awareness in the local community. Many know it for its work in maintaining the gardens at the Punta Gorda Woman's Club, the Punta Gorda Library, the History Park and Laishley Park.

The Club's only fundraiser is the Holly Days Home Tour.. Four homes and the historic First United Methodist Church are decorated for the holidays by teams of club members. This very popular event is viewed by many as the launch of the holiday season. The funds made available by the tour are used to support a wide variety of deserving causes. This year the Club's contributions will total \$25,000.

The Club's budget for 2016 has provided for \$12,000 in Higher Education Scholarships awarded to graduates from local high schools who are planning to study subject areas related to horticulture, agriculture and the natural environment. Other education donations will support the Florida Federated Garden Club Scholarship Fund and the Wekiva Youth Camp. In keeping with its mission to promote the beautification and improvement of Punta Gorda and the surrounding area and in the conservation of natural resources the Club has also made donations to Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, Friends of Charlotte Harbor Estuary, PGI Green Thumbs, Peace River Wildlife Center, and the FFGC Reef Restoration Program. The FFGC garden therapy program at the Avon Park Correctional Institution which operates a plant nursery also benefits from the Club's contributions.

Recognizing their responsibility to address issues in the world community the Club also supports ECHO, an international organization with a local base in Fort Myers where they operate their Global Farm. ECHO works to support sustainable agricultural development in countries around the world where hunger is a pervasive problem. Visitors may tour the farm and learn about their many innovative approaches to growing a variety of food crops unfamiliar to most of us.

Pat Sandler, PGGC Co-President, has stated "Our members are proud to be able to contribute to such a fine group of recipients and we are all very grateful to the many members of the community who continue to enthusiastically support our fund raising efforts." The 2016 Holly Days Home Tour is scheduled for December 2 and 3 from 11 am to 4 pm in the Punta Gorda Historic District. Consult the Club's website [www.pggc.org](http://www.pggc.org) for details.