

# Nonprofit of the Year

## **Alice Moseley Folk Art Museum**

The Alice Moseley Folk Art Museum preserves the legacy of one of Hancock County's most treasured artists while sharing the stories that make the Mississippi Gulf Coast unique. Home to more than 100 of Alice Moseley's original paintings, the museum celebrates her unmistakable style, colorful sense of humor, and ability to capture everyday life with warmth and authenticity. True to Alice's belief that art should be enjoyed by everyone, admission is always free. The museum welcomes visitors from near and far while giving residents an opportunity to connect with an important part of the area's cultural heritage.

More than a gallery, the museum serves as a reminder of the creativity and character that define Bay St. Louis. By preserving Alice Moseley's work and inspiring new generations to appreciate folk art and local history, the museum continues to enrich Hancock County's thriving arts community and strengthen its reputation as a destination where creativity, culture, and community come together.

## **Bay - Waveland Garden Club**

Since 1938, the Bay-Waveland Garden Club has helped shape the beauty and character of Hancock County. What began as a group of neighbors with a shared vision for beautifying Bay St. Louis and Waveland. The Club has grown into a lasting community organization dedicated to conservation, civic pride, and environmental stewardship.

Over the years, the club has supported beautification projects, encouraged the preservation of native trees and plants, recognized outstanding local landscapes, and promoted gardening through education and community involvement. Its members have also championed civic improvements and maintain the Blue Star Memorial in Waveland, honoring the men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and Tercentenary Park in the Bay, which honors the founders of Bay St. Louis.

Nearly nine decades after its founding, the Bay-Waveland Garden Club continues to demonstrate that caring for a community means caring for the places people call home. Through its dedication to preserving Hancock County's natural beauty and inspiring others to do the same, the organization has left a legacy that can be seen across the community.

## **Diamondhead School of Fine Arts**

Since opening its doors in 2021, the Diamondhead School of Fine Arts (DSFA) has become a place where creativity, confidence, and community come together. As a nonprofit organization, DSFA provides high-quality instruction in dance, music, theater, visual art, language, and wellness, creating opportunities for students of all ages to discover and develop their talents.

Founded by Sarah Shelton and built on the belief that the arts should be accessible to everyone, the school offers scholarships and inclusive programming that welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. Through performances, productions, exhibitions, and community events, DSFA encourages artistic expression while helping students build confidence, discipline, and lifelong skills both on and off the stage.

In just a few years, the Diamondhead School of Fine Arts has become an important part of Hancock County's cultural landscape. By inspiring creativity, nurturing young artists, and bringing the community together through the arts, DSFA is helping shape a future where the arts continue to enrich lives across the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

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## **Diamondhead Women's Club**

The Diamondhead Women's Club (DWC), founded in 1993 by Terri Downey, is a thriving philanthropic organization with more than 100 members dedicated to supporting and celebrating women.

Our club has demonstrated remarkable generosity over the past several years, donating more than \$100,000 in charitable contributions.

These donations have benefited numerous local organizations, including Pink Heart Funds, Gulf Coast Center for Non-Violence, Hancock County Food Bank, Hancock Animal Shelter, CASA, and Magdalene House.

Beyond monetary donations, the club provides practical support through initiatives such as donating socks, personal care items, and slippers to Woodland Village residents; providing treats and goodies for first responders; creating hand-painted Christmas cards and special occasion cards for Woodland Village residents; and collecting and distributing coats, gloves, hats, and blankets to veterans.

The organization maintains an active social calendar that includes fashion shows, line dancing, Christmas programs, pool plunges, monthly luncheons and presentations, and fall festivals. These activities create opportunities for fellowship while continuing the club's mission and passion for helping those in need within the community.

## **Friends of the Animal Shelter**

For more than 25 years, the Friends of the Animal Shelter in Hancock County has worked to end euthanasia as a means of controlling animal overpopulation. As the nonprofit partner of the Hancock County Animal Shelter, the organization supports lifesaving programs through volunteerism, adoption efforts, fundraising and initiatives that promote responsible pet ownership.

Among its many programs is the GUMBO Fund that provides veterinary care for sick or injured shelter animals, giving them the treatment they need and a better chance of finding loving homes. Friends also reduces pet overpopulation by offering spay and neuter assistance to Hancock County pet owners at NO cost. Friends also supplies pet food to the Hancock County Food Pantry so families experiencing food insecurity can also feed their pets. Friends hosts community fundraisers, including its annual Spring Tea with Friends and the Holiday Tour of Homes, to support its mission.

Whether funding emergency veterinary care, promoting responsible pet ownership or aiding families in crisis, the Friends of the Animal Shelter in Hancock County continues to make a lasting difference for animals and the families who give them homes.

## **Hancock County Food Pantry**

For nearly four decades, the Hancock County Food Pantry has been a lifeline for local families facing food insecurity. Founded in 1986 by area churches, the nonprofit is operated entirely by volunteers and provides food and personal hygiene products to Hancock County residents experiencing temporary financial hardship.

Since opening its doors, the Food Pantry has served more than 355,000 individuals during 153,000 family visits. In 2023 alone, it provided assistance to 7,345 families, distributing hundreds of thousands of pounds of donated, recovered, and USDA food while purchasing more than \$241,000 in additional groceries to help meet the growing need. More than 96% of the organization's expenditures go directly toward purchasing food for those it serves.

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Through the dedication of its volunteers and the generosity of the community, the Hancock County Food Pantry continues to ensure that thousands of local families have access to nutritious food when they need it most.

## **Hancock Health Foundation**

For more than 30 years, the Hancock Health Foundation has helped improve the health and well-being of Hancock County by investing in programs and services that address the community's most pressing healthcare needs. Founded in 1993, the nonprofit partners with healthcare providers, businesses, and community organizations to fund initiatives that strengthen local care and expand access for residents.

The Foundation supports projects that make a lasting impact, including the Mammography Assistance Program for uninsured women, emergency telestroke services, youth mental health education, infant mortality reduction efforts, and specialized medical equipment that enhances patient care. By identifying unmet needs and bringing together donors and community partners, the Foundation helps ensure critical healthcare resources remain available close to home.

Driven by a mission to bridge the gap between community and healthcare, the Hancock Health Foundation continues to improve lives by making quality healthcare more accessible for the people of Hancock County.

## **The Sober Society**

The Sober Society is dedicated to helping individuals and families affected by substance use disorder build healthier, more hopeful futures. Serving the Mississippi Gulf Coast from its Waveland clubhouse, the nonprofit provides recovery support, education, and community resources designed to help people achieve long-term success in recovery.

Recognizing that recovery looks different for every individual, The Sober Society offers a wide range of free support meetings, peer recovery programs, educational workshops, and family resources in a welcoming, judgment-free environment. Guided by professionals and individuals with lived recovery experience, the organization helps participants develop the tools, confidence, and connections needed to build meaningful lives beyond addiction.

By fostering hope, reducing stigma, and creating opportunities for lasting recovery, The Sober Society is strengthening individuals, supporting families, and helping build a healthier Hancock County community—one person, one family, and one day at a time.