

# STROLL

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## PATHWAYS EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

IS HELPING MAKE A  
BRIGHTER FUTURE

PAGE 32





## Behind The Scenes Of A **BRIGHTER FUTURE**

BY ASHLEA HANSON WITH PATHWAYS

**I**n partnership with photographer Brian Tietz, Pathways Early Education Center of Immokalee recently conducted the "Brighter Future" photo project, showcasing the vast potential inherent in every child. This project highlights the importance of investing in equitable growth opportunities from a young age, emphasizing that these children are the future leaders and backbone of our community. The photographs beautifully depict Pathways students as young visionaries, dressed for success in their future careers.

Organizations that participated in the project include Arthrex for aspiring engineers; North Collier Fire & Rescue and Collier County Sheriff's Office

for future first responders; Collier Clerk's Office for those interested in a judicial career; Naples Airport and Elite Jets for budding pilots; The Naples Zoo for prospective zookeepers; DeAngelis Diamond for future builders; Physicians Regional for aspiring donors and nurses; Tamiami Ford for budding mechanics; and, of course, Pathways served as the perfect setting for our future educators.

The recent photoshoot plays a crucial role in the launch of Pathways' \$2.25 million campaign, as these images will be prominently featured in the campaign's promotional materials and at their key fundraising event, Star Light, Star Bright: Pathways to a Brighter Future, on January 15. These photographs will serve as a powerful visual narrative, capturing the essence of Pathways' mission and the vibrant spirit of their children. They aim to inspire donors and community members by illustrating that investing in these students is an investment in the future leaders of our community, and our shared tomorrow.

Two Pathways alumni selected for this project are recent graduates Milton and Eleanor.

Milton, a young boy whose educational adventure began at Pathways, initially faced challenges, particularly in language skills, and needed "urgent intervention." Coming from a Spanish-speaking household, he struggled with basic letter and number recognition. However, Milton thrived with Pathways' tailored literacy program and nurturing environment. He became proficient in both English and Spanish, mastered problem-solving, and transformed into a confident, eager student ready for kindergarten. Milton surpassed developmental benchmarks, showcasing the power of perseverance and support.

Eleanor's journey, like many at Pathways, is filled with promise and challenges. Her parents, dedicated community members, sought the best education for her amidst rising living costs. Discovering Pathways offered tuition assistance was a pivotal moment. In an environment full of wonder and encouragement, Eleanor

flourished. Throughout her journey at Pathways, which began in infancy, she honed her abilities in reading, writing, and mathematics, while also nurturing empathy and understanding. Eleanor graduated among the "top of her class" both prepared and self-assured, exemplifying the transformative impact of early education and community support.

Presented here is a sneak peek of the behind-the-scenes magic that showcases the dreams and aspirations nurtured at Pathways.

### UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF TOMORROW'S LEADERS:

**More About the \$2.25M Campaign for a Brighter Future**  
At the heart of Pathways Early Education Center of Immokalee's mission is the belief that a solid educational foundation is crucial for developing the strong future leaders society desperately needs today. This early intervention sets off a ripple effect, influencing the rest of a child's life and the community, creating waves of enduring impact. The launch of Pathways' \$2.25 million campaign aims to fuel these ripples, transforming them into powerful waves of change for children and the community.

The distinctive design of this campaign propels Pathways on a course for growth and long-term sustainability, enabling them to serve more children in need in Immokalee while maintaining their current excellent level of service. Funding will enhance the curriculum and professional development for educators, keeping programs at the cutting edge of early childhood education. A solid annual fund will secure financial stability, enable growth, welcome more students, and hire additional skilled staff. Critical improvements and expansions to the Education Center, including upgraded playgrounds and facilities, will support a vibrant learning environment, enabling them to serve 30% more students. This growth directly addresses educational disparities in Immokalee, giving more children the opportunity to thrive.



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The campaign is strengthened by the generous backing of the George and Cindy Rusu Family Foundation, which has pledged a \$750,000 matching gift for all new and increased donations, including multi-year pledges, until April 2025. This commitment extends beyond financial support; it invests in dreams, opportunities, and a shared future, paving the way for a brighter tomorrow for all.

### **CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

By supporting Pathways Early Education Center, you are not just contributing to an educational institution; you are investing in the future of our community. Your support helps shape the leaders of tomorrow, ensuring they have the foundation needed to succeed. Together, we can create a brighter future for all children in Immokalee.

Let's unite to create a brighter future. Contact Executive Director Brandon Dowdy to discover how you can get involved, or visit [pathwaysearlyeducation.org](http://pathwaysearlyeducation.org).