



The Story Behind “The Q”

Quality Life Center is located in the Dunbar community - an underserved area in Fort Myers, Florida. In 1990, areas of Dunbar had serious problems with drugs and poverty.

The Early Years

The center began with Abdul’Haq Muhammed teaching self-development through martial arts to eight students. Joined by other families looking for constructive activities and adult role models, a program was developed to address academic underachievement while working to instill values of integrity, discipline and responsibility, serving primarily a minority population. **The goal was personal growth, and character-building.** Though it thrived within different venues in the Dunbar community, the center still lacked a home.

The Building

The nightclub at the corner of MLK and Ford Street was shut down and seized by the federal government. It was well-known in the community as a haven for drug-dealing, prostitution and money laundering, and its owner was sent to prison for running a large-scale crack cocaine trafficking ring.

For a vision of transformation, the location was perfect. Police Chief Larry Hart, Bud Boyer of the U.S. Treasury and Sheriff John McDougall played a significant role in making the dream a reality. The SWFL Community Foundation provided funding for the initial building plans. A competitive process led to Quality Life Center acquiring the building. In addition to numerous repairs, the ceiling had to be replaced and the roof had to be raised in order to comply with building code regulations. Businesses, agencies and individuals came together to donate time, money and materials – all so children could have a safe place to learn and grow.

The community raised \$1.3 million. After a massive renovation project, the organization finally had a home – right in its Dunbar birthplace.

Growing

Since then, **Quality Life Center has infused over \$22 million into the community, served over 25,000** residents through adult and youth programs, and has hired hundreds of local residents. Programs include afterschool and summer camp programs including the arts and interactive academic activities, as well as an early learning program for preschoolers and a teen leadership program.

A focus on teens led to tremendous growth. Thanks to the generosity of the Elizabeth K. Galeana Foundation, a campaign to add a new wing onto the building was begun. The community has raised over \$1.5M for the project. The expansion project includes a teen center, a commercial kitchen and event center.



**3210 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd., Fort Myers, FL
239.334.2797 - www.qualitylifecenter.org**