



Gulfshore Playhouse

downtown Naples that will spur more the \$20 million in economic impact annually, says Coury, the CEO and artistic director.

“With officials estimating between 122,000 and 162,000 new permanent residents in Collier County by 2040,

the importance of having established world-class cultural opportunities that visitors and residents can enjoy, participate in and bring others to experience will become even more critical to enhancing the quality of life and elevating the attractiveness of Southwest Florida,” she says.

The Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, a 30-acre oasis of art and nature, features a large collection of sculptures by world-renowned artists, each one delighting visitors with its own whimsical personality. The garden, on the south bank of the Peace River in Charlotte County, is just four years old but already a must-see, must-do in Southwest Florida for tourists and residents alike. Adriana Quiñones, executive director of the garden, wants to make sure the garden benefits the entire community.

Her organization has been working with many non profits in the community – including Girls on the Run, The Homeless Coalition, the Military Heritage Museum, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County.

“We intend to be a community force and our area will be the better because of it ... because we are growing in all the good ways.”

THE ARTS ARE FLOURISHING, THANKS TO PHILANTHROPIC SPIRIT

Molly Deckart moved to Southwest Florida from Idaho last fall to lead the Alliance for the Arts, a nonprofit visual and performing arts center founded in 1975 in Fort Myers. The Alliance sits on a 10-acre parklike campus with indoor and outdoor theaters, including an amphitheater that can hold 1,500 people, art galleries, classrooms, flex spaces for dance and yoga, and studio spaces for artists.

“With all the wonderful spaces we have, you can do just about anything related to the arts on our 10 acres, and that is really special,” she says. “We want everyone to use it – it’s everyone’s Alliance.

The Alliance for the Arts is just one of the many cultural attractions in Southwest Florida, rich with museums and galleries, theatres, symphonies, concert halls, art walks, cultural festivals and more. To name just a few, you can visit Artis-Naples and indulge in the visual and performance arts – including a visit to the Baker Museum

and perhaps even a performance by the Naples Philharmonic. Or go back in time viewing a classic film in the renovated Florida Repertory Theatre in Fort Myers. Perhaps you would rather hit the streets of Punta Gorda and experience its murals before catching the Punta Gorda Symphony’s latest production.

Kristen Coury founded Gulfshore Playhouse 17 years ago to bring professional regional theater to Naples. The Playhouse produces six mainstage productions from October through May, hosts an Annual New Works Festival each fall, and welcomes nearly 30,000 patrons annually.

The Gulfshore Playhouse has been so successful, growing 20% a year for the past 10 years, that now the nonprofit organization is set to break ground in the fall on a \$59.8 million theater and education center. The new Gulfshore Playhouse Cultural Campus slated to open in fall 2023 is destined to be an iconic landmark at the gateway to