

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REALTORS support kids in Alachua County by voting

August 30, 2018 - Gainesville, FL- The Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS (GACAR) is supporting the Children's Trust of Alachua County and the ½ cent for Alachua Schools on the November 6th ballot. Good schools are vital for a successful community, and good school facilities are critical to the success of students and teachers in the classroom. GACAR encourages our community to support both infrastructure (1/2 cent sales tax) and program (Children's Trust of Alachua County) improvements.

Schools face many of the same infrastructure issues as homeowners with AC repair, roof leaks, new technology, expanding with more kids, etc. Did you realize that state funding is \$418 (6%) less per student than ten years ago? Just in Alachua County funding has been cut by more than \$168,000,000 over the last 10 years. Too many of our science labs are ill equipped for our students to conduct basic hands-on experiments. The schools have insufficient funds presently to keep up the yearly maintenance let alone renovations, technological improvements, or increase safety measures. Alachua County public schools are currently operating with a backlog of more than \$18 million for just roof resurfacing, painting, HVAC replacement and flooring replacement. It is estimated that the backlog will increase another \$6.5 million this year, and the political will does not exist in Tallahassee to address the funding crisis. If we are to improve Alachua County schools, it must be a local effort, and it must be done now – there is no “plan B”.

“While improving school facilities and infrastructure is a key factor in enhancing our community's value proposition to its residents, strong support and resources outside of the classroom are major drivers for student success too,” said GACAR President Susan McQuillan. She went on to say, “Our community should provide the foundation to allow kids to develop and accomplish their dreams.” The Children's Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) provides new parents tools to keep their kids healthy and safe and activity centers while schools are out with trained professionals. CTAC will also reduce duplication of services by increasing the collaboration and coordination within the community.

This situation can't resolve itself, and it will continue to deteriorate with time if we take no action. Schools are a core value to every community and the kids that populate them are our future. Our community, our kids, our schools, and our future deserves better. Individual and corporate donations are still needed to ensure our community takes the right step forward in November.

For more information on ½ cent for Alachua County Schools campaign please go to:

www.yesforalachuaschools.org

For more information on the Children's Trust of Alachua County please go to:

www.childrenstrustofalachuacounty.org