



# A new home for student scientists

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**T**he University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and Southwest Florida growers are about to build the most important rooms to be added to UF's student housing in the coming year. They will make room for eight more budding scientists to work in Immokalee on HLB.

I'm not doing this alone. Local growers, including citrus leaders such as Stephane Gardinier, Jim Gravely, the Barron Collier Partnership and Hugh English are all helping pay for the bungalow.

Like me, they recognize that the major obstacle to recruiting graduate students to the UF/IFAS Southwest

Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) is lack of housing on site. We're boosting beds by more than 50 percent with the project.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS SERVE ESSENTIAL ROLE

Graduate students do much of the day-to-day work that eventually adds up to scientific breakthroughs. They collect data, care for the experimental groves and help write the papers that serve faculty's academic purpose, which frees up valuable faculty time to dedicate to their industry purpose.

That's why I've invested \$300,000 in the graduate student residence — what some of us call a dorm. It's why

I attended the groundbreaking in late September so I could personally thank the supporters and local growers who made it possible.

Those supporters include Southwest Florida Research and Education Foundation board vice president Gardinier of Gardinier Florida Citrus, Bob Newsome of Barron Collier, and others. The foundation was the project's biggest financial backer. Board members also solicited contributions from others in the region.

## SWFREC'S CITRUS CONTRIBUTIONS

The residence highlights how important graduate students are to the work we do for you. It emphasizes the great industry support for SWFREC. It gives us a moment to reflect on SWFREC's contributions to citrus.

One of the most important breakthroughs in HLB research in the past decade has been the increased understanding in the role nutrients play in extending the life and maintaining the productivity of your trees. Much of that work was done in Immokalee by Kelly Morgan, whom I appointed as SWFREC's director last year.

## A SALUTE TO STANSLY

It's where the late Phil Stansly discovered the value of winter dormant spraying and reflective mulch to repel psyllids. In fact, Stansly's work is so valued that Gardinier donated to the residence project in Stansly's name. Also, in late September, the UF Board of Trustees approved naming the building the Philip A. Stansly Graduate Student Residence.

## TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Presently, we have students who delay coming to Immokalee until an existing room opens. I don't have to tell you how time is of the essence in the HLB fight. But living offsite costs too much for some students, leaves those without cars stranded, and turns



Ibukun "Timothy" Ayankojo, a soil and water sciences doctoral student, is thankful to have housing at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center because off-campus housing is 45 minutes away and more expensive.