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**CONTACT:**  
Hunter Carpenter  
Manager, Communications and Marketing  
941-404-9070 (c) | [hcarpenter@cfsarasota.org](mailto:hcarpenter@cfsarasota.org)

**Community Foundation of Sarasota County Awards Five Grants  
Promoting Equity and Access for Underrepresented, Geographically  
Underserved Communities**  
*Grants focus on educational and health care equity*

**SARASOTA, FL** – In its first ever Equity and Access competitive grant cycle, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has awarded five local nonprofit organizations who have expanded their services to promote educational and health care equity for people facing longstanding barriers in our community.

Nearly \$130,000 has been provided to the Center for Religious Tolerance with support from Multicultural Health Institute and SRQ Strong, Family Promise of South Sarasota County, Forty Carrots Family Center, Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative, and Teen Court of Sarasota. Each of these organizations touch one or several underrepresented groups, including geographically underserved neighborhoods, communities of color, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and single mothers, among others.

“Each proposal was reviewed by a diverse committee of community members, whose life experiences and perspectives enriched the decision-making process,” says Kirsten Russell, Vice President of Community Impact at the Community Foundation. “These grant awards reflect the community's voice and vision for creating and increasing access and equity in the place they are proud to call home.”

***Programs Supported: Educational and Health Care Equity***

- With **trauma-informed care** at the core of its work, the [Center of Religious Tolerance](#) will channel its support to bring in a specialist to engage communities currently not connected to behavioral health and social services through educational outreach, trainings, and one-on-one coaching sessions. Additionally, this collaborative project will help develop culturally-sensitive resources about stress, coping, and resilience, ultimately to provide accessible healing opportunities for underserved communities.

- Through its Bridge Housing Program, [Family Promise of South Sarasota County](#) will continue to help families overcome barriers to **housing and financial stability** by providing primarily single mothers in South Sarasota County with resources to cover emergency expenses and immediate basic needs, as well as opportunities to advance their careers and earn a living wage
- [Forty Carrots Family Center](#) will offer an 8-week, evidence-based **parenting education** course to inmates participating in substance abuse recovery or re-entry programs at the Sarasota County Jail. Guided by trauma-informed care specialists, the course will not only enable parents to strengthen relationships with their children, but also encourage participants to work towards recovery and eventually reunification with their loved ones.
- In a four-part Arts and Racial Justice Panel Series, the [Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative](#) will virtually engage area artists, advocates, arts and civic leaders, and students for conversations that promote **awareness of racial inequities within the arts** and explore transformative solutions to effect positive change. All panel discussions are free and open to the public.
- Funding for [Teen Court of Sarasota](#) will support its Prevention Track Program, designed to provide **positive redirection to youth** through free peer-to-peer sessions, mindfulness classes, and mental health counseling. The program will also hire a case manager who will be dedicated to working with students on high school campuses and bringing their referrals to Teen Court for a chance at restorative justice.

### ***Looking Ahead***

Applications are currently available for the spring Equity and Access Grant cycle. Eligible nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply at [www.cfsarasota.org/nonprofits/grants](http://www.cfsarasota.org/nonprofits/grants) by the deadline of April 1, 2021.

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is committed to improving the lives of all people. We believe the strength of our community is in its diversity. Together, we strive to address issues and create opportunities so all people can achieve their full potential. To learn more about our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, visit <https://www.cfsarasota.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>.

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***About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County:*** The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is a public charity founded in 1979 by the Southwest Florida Estate Planning Council as a resource for caring individuals and the causes they support, enabling them to make a charitable impact on the community. With assets of \$421 million in more than 1,500 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$48.9 million dollars last year in the areas of education, the arts, health and human services, civic engagement, animal welfare and the environment. Since its founding, the Community Foundation has been able to grant more than \$323 million to area nonprofit organizations to our community thanks to the generosity of charitable individuals, families, and businesses. For more information, visit [www.CFSarasota.org](http://www.CFSarasota.org) or call (941) 955-3000.