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**Lee Wetherington Foundation Surpasses \$2 Million in Grants
Supporting Local Nonprofit Causes**

*Knowledge and support from the Community Foundation of Sarasota
County help guide Wetherington's charitable investments.*

SARASOTA, FL – Nearly two decades since its inception, the Lee Wetherington Foundation has reached a considerable charitable milestone, surpassing \$2 million in grants awarded to local nonprofit organizations across Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto counties. From donating acreage to state parks to building transitional housing for the homeless, the Lee Wetherington Foundation has awarded notable support to a myriad of causes over the years, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties, Forty Carrots Family Center, Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, Harvest House, and Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. Since 2002, Wetherington has gifted more than \$2.8 million to the foundation.

The family foundation, administered by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, is guided by the vision of Lee and Caroline Wetherington, local philanthropists whose passions focus on empowering those in need, especially young people. This giving philosophy coincides with the Community Foundation's commitment to providing donors, including private foundations, the services needed to connect family-based philanthropy with community knowledge and understanding.

"Support from the Community Foundation through thoughtful coaching and awareness of community needs helps ensure we're making the best investments possible with our giving," says Lee Wetherington. "My wife Caroline and I like to be involved in projects, and make sure that our money works the best for everyone taking part. Thanks to the Community Foundation, I know our giving is well managed, balanced, and has a purpose – to give others opportunities to get out of bad situations and provide a bridge to move up in life."

A Florida native and veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Lee Wetherington started giving back in 1977 as a driver for Meals on Wheels, delivering dishes to homebound and food-insecure neighbors. In addition to his volunteerism, personal experiences also inform Wetherington's charitable giving, as both Lee and Caroline were raised by single parents and faced significant challenges earlier in life.

“We’ve had to make our own way and figure out how to get through some difficult situations in our lives,” says Caroline Wetherington. “Now, we want to help others overcome their own challenges and achieve success.”

As Wetherington’s business – Lee Wetherington Homes – grew from startup to one of the region’s most well-known homebuilders, so did his desire to help others. A desire that guided him to the Community Foundation in 2002, where he established the Lee Wetherington Foundation with an initial gift of \$1 million. Lee would deepen his relationship with the Community Foundation by serving on the board for seven years, including as board chair from 2008 to 2010, and as an early proponent of its two-generation approach, working with families and children simultaneously to create cycles of opportunity.

“We’re so proud of what Lee and Caroline have been able to accomplish through their thoughtful and strategic philanthropy, and more so what this means for the nonprofit causes close to their hearts,” says Roxie Jerde, President and CEO of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. “One can only imagine the countless lives touched and yet to be impacted by the Wetheringtons’ profound generosity. How remarkable it is that an individual life can inspire and transform others, even indirectly, thanks to the personal touch of family philanthropy.”

To learn more about the Lee Wetherington Foundation and its charitable endeavors, visit <https://lwhomes.com/giving-back/>

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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 or call (941) 955-3000.