



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA
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**Plans for nearly \$5 Million of Hurricane Ian Recovery Charitable
Donations Underway**

*The Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund has identified common funding
gaps, best practices to support strategic grantmaking post-crisis.*

SARASOTA, FL – In the two months since Hurricane Ian’s historic U.S. landfall, donors from our community and across the country contributed nearly \$5 million to be applied to long-term recovery efforts through the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

The Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund supports long-term, long-range programs to sustain human service agencies serving people in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties as they recover from Hurricane Ian’s impact. Long-term recovery includes support for the economic, social, spiritual and emotional well-being of a community following a large-scale disaster — needs that often emerge after emergency disaster-response efforts have concluded.

“Through the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund, our region has the support to improve not only the lives of those who have been devastated by Hurricane Ian, but also our important community networks for the long run,” said Roxie Jerde, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. “The outstanding support from contributors will be met with thoughtful recommendations to distribute those generous gifts so that our region has better knowledge, tools and resources to meet today’s challenges, and improve our responses to future disasters.”

The Community Foundation has researched best practices to develop a framework for responding to Hurricane Ian's impacts through the fund. This framework was informed by learning from other communities across the country that faced similar challenges and that shared key lessons in how to most effectively apply those dollars to improve local responses to a crisis. The full report, "Disaster Response Analysis" is available at <https://www.cfsarasota.org/Suncoast-Disaster-Recovery-Fund>, and future updates on grants and outreach will also be provided at this link.

Recommendations to distribute the funds are being formed by a task force of community members, including board and staff members of the Community Foundation. Board member CJ Fishman and legal counsel Chip Gaylor, Esq., co-chair the task force, and Kirsten Russell, Vice President, Community Impact, is the staff liaison who commissioned the analysis of other communities. Also participating are Cheri Coryea, a consultant with The Patterson Foundation, and Angelica Hull, Director, Community Impact with the Community Foundation.

"It is human nature to want to respond quickly to help neighbors in need, and thankfully we have other funding resources to keep people in their homes, their cars running, and children in day care. This allows our approach with the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund to be thoughtful and deliberate," Russell said. "We will be flexible, collaborative within each community across our four-county area, and most importantly, effective."

Early Steps & Expected Timeline

The Community Foundation is encouraging elected officials, emergency managers and leaders from local nonprofit organizations to take part in a "Regional Recovery Acceleration Week" December 12 – 15 in Arcadia. The program is hosted by SBP, a national disaster recovery and resilience nonprofit that helps communities understand and streamline the post-disaster recovery process, which was a contributor to the community foundation's report. Along with national supporters, the DeSoto Board of County Commissions is a co-sponsor of the programs, which are free to attend, however space is limited. Registration is available at www.SBPUSA.org.

- Mon., Dec. 12 is designed for elected officials, public administrators, emergency managers and public financial leaders to understand how to fully assess unmet needs, how to transition from response to long-term recovery, and how to navigate disaster financial management.
- Tues. and Wed., Dec. 13 -14 offers a two-day course on disaster case management training and is designed for government employees and nonprofit case managers. The course will run from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. both days.
- Thurs., Dec. 15 is a rebuilding training for nonprofits to help their teams understand how to best help their clients through recovery, including a session on how to navigate the FEMA appeals process.

"SBP is an incredibly knowledgeable organization that learned from Hurricane Katrina how to rebuild networks of communities, and we are fortunate to have them in our area and sharing their knowledge with our leaders and helpers who will guide us through our own evolution," Russell said.

While deadlines for support requests have not been established, co-chair Fishman said the task force understands the need to balance strategic support alongside pressing needs.

“We are not going to take years to distribute these grants,” Fishman said. “But, we want to take the time necessary to ensure the greatest needs that encompass the whole community are met.”

Significant Support from Near and Far

Community donors quickly completed a \$750,000 dollar-for-dollar match from The Patterson Foundation that was put forward days ahead of Ian’s landfall. Along with this match, The Patterson Foundation also contributed a \$500,000 initial gift to catalyze donations to the Fund. The Patterson Foundation is a long-time collaborator with the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, strengthening efforts such as the annual Season of Sharing campaign and the Giving Challenge.

“For years, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has worked to provide the givers in our region opportunities to channel their generosity toward outsized impact,” said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. “The Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund is the latest extension of their expertise in helping people contribute toward a better future for our community. It is a trusted resource for our region as we work to recover with resiliency.”

Nearly 1,000 donations have been made to the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund from individuals and private foundations, as well as corporate institutions, and fellow community foundations from across the country. Most of the \$4,857,676 in gifts were made directly from those living in Sarasota, Manatee, DeSoto, and Charlotte counties, however, about 12 percent of donations came from outside the state of Florida, said Jay Young, Vice President, Philanthropy for the Community Foundation. Contributions came from as far away as Oregon, Tennessee and New York, Young said.

“When a disaster of this scale hits your community, people want to help in any way they can,” said Young. “We are grateful to the many generous people throughout the region and across the country who have entrusted our foundation to put their goodwill into action as we rebuild from the storm.”

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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 \$520 million in more than 1,570 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$27.5 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 \$350 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.