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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:                                CONTACT:**
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**“Season of Sharing” Surpasses $4.4 Million in Donations as 22nd Annual Campaign Reaches Historic Milestone**

*Seven matching gifts totaling $700,000 contributed by The Patterson Foundation enhance the millions provided by the community to support neighbors in need all year long.*

**SARASOTA, FL –** Building on more than two decades of community generosity, the annual “Season of Sharing” campaign surpassed $4.4 million in donations – the highest annual amount raised since its establishment in 2000 by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Sarasota Herald-Tribune to provide a safety net for neighbors in crisis. During the last three months, more than 3,600 gifts were given by donors of all means to offer stability for those on the economic edge in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties.

Now in its 22nd year, the campaign has restored security and peace of mind for nearly 50,000 individuals and families from Punta Gorda to Parrish by providing more than $34 million to assist with housing, utilities, child care, and transportation.

“This outpouring of generosity reflects the *deep* trust our community puts in Season of Sharing to be a dependable lifeline for people during their most challenging moments,” says Roxie Jerde, President and CEO of the Community Foundation. “The complex, everyday challenges that our neighbors are facing call on us to meet them – however we are able – with hope and support so they have the staying power to keep them on their feet long after a crisis has passed. Thanks to everyone who counted themselves as a supporter, this historic response will enable us to fulfill that promise of community care in the months and year ahead.”

Among those helping to fulfill that promise are the brave individuals and families who shared their personal stories of how Season of Sharing positively impacted their lives through the longstanding community journalism efforts of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, which are key to our community’s understanding of the campaign, as well as deeper issues made evident in the lives of those they profile.

"When we profile families who have been assisted by Season of Sharing in the Herald-Tribune, it helps readers realize that we all share similar struggles, hopes, and dreams,” says Jennifer Orsi, Executive Editor of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. “People see themselves in those stories and realize that with Season of Sharing their generosity can have an immediate positive impact on the lives of many people in the region."

Another milestone was achieved by longtime philanthropic partner, The Patterson Foundation, who continued its generous support of the campaign through matching opportunities, contributing $100,000 for every $500,000 raised by the community. With no cap on the number of $100,000 contributions donors could activate prior to January 31, the community gravitated to this opportunity to strengthen their charitable giving and sparked seven such contributions totaling $700,000, a significant first achieved in The Patterson Foundation’s 12 years of support.

“The givers in our region have thoroughly embraced Season of Sharing’s power to strengthen families and individuals facing undue hardship, along with their role in making its work possible,” said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. “Their phenomenal participation has done more than drive this outstanding $700,000 contribution: It has restored a sense of dignity and hope to more people.”

In the year to come, the $4.4 million raised will be distributed with thoughtfulness and urgency through a robust network of more than 50 human services agencies, covering expenses – such as rental and mortgage assistance, utilities, child care, and transportation – that could otherwise leave people without a permanent roof over their heads.

“Be it a global pandemic or personal setback, Season of Sharing is our region’s time-tested and trusted emergency safety net, always ready – and willing -- to extend a helping hand,” says Jerde. “The compassion shown by our neighbors – often to complete strangers – reflects the very beating heart of this campaign: that you can profoundly change someone’s life, whatever your means. Every act of kindness counts, especially when it comes to being there for our neighbors.”

While fundraising for the campaign officially runs from November through January, support provided by Season of Sharing is counted on all year long and quickly distributed through a network of more than 50 human services agencies to assist those in need. Donations to the Season of Sharing fund are accepted all year and may be made online at [www.cfsarasota.org/community-impact/community-care/season-of-sharing](http://www.cfsarasota.org/community-impact/community-care/season-of-sharing) or by sending a check (payable to Community Foundation of Sarasota County) to Attn: Season of Sharing, 2635 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34237. There are no administrative fees and 100 percent of your gift goes to helping go directly to those who need it most, with none of the proverbial “red tape.” All donations are tax-deductible.

For 22 years, Season of Sharing has had the staying power to restore confidence and hope for neighbors in crisis, with support from our community. Built on collaboration and trust, the community-wide campaign is a partnership between the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, with giving strengthened by The Patterson Foundation. To read stories from families and individuals who have been helped throughout this year by Season of Sharing, visit [www.heraldtribune.com](http://www.heraldtribune.com).

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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](http://www.CFSarasota.org) or call (941) 955-3000.