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“Season of Sharing” Reaches More than $3.7 Million in Donations throughout 21st Annual Campaign

Since March 2020, the community-wide campaign has raised more than $6.5 million to provide stability for the community’s most vulnerable.

SARASOTA, FL – Three months of unparalleled generosity have elevated the annual “Season of Sharing” campaign to a significant milestone, raising more than $3.7 million in donations at a time when community needs exacerbated by the global pandemic have never been greater. Moved by a call to help fellow neighbors in crisis, 3,200 donors and local foundations came together to offer stability for those most vulnerable in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties, bringing the campaign’s 21-year total to over $30 million.

This outpouring of support comes as requests from people who never imagined they’d require help reach a precarious tipping point. Prior to the campaign’s annual kick-off in November 2020, Season of Sharing funding was on pace to be exhausted in record time – just seven months – even with other government and private aid. This was following an additional rally of $2.8 million raised during the spring and early summer of 2020.

“Community generosity fueled by a ‘pay it forward’ spirit has tremendously shifted the calculus, providing emergency funds for our local human services agencies to call up in the months of continued, dramatic need ahead,” says Roxie Jerde, President and CEO of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. “This remarkable response is equaled by the faith placed in Season of Sharing as this time-tested and trusted resource, led by our enduring partnership with the Herald Tribune Media Group. These gifts signal our community’s capacity to heal and come together is stronger than ever before.”

Throughout the year to come, the nearly 3,800 gifts raised will continue to help neighbors with rental assistance, utility bills, child care, transportation, and other crucial expenses that help families regain security when it is needed most urgently, whatever the crisis. This support will amplify the reach of Season of Sharing’s vital safety network, which has served more than 35,000 households since its inception.
“So many in our community recognize that when crisis comes, so does an opportunity to extend a helping hand,” says Jerde. “For decades, Season of Sharing gives everyone a chance to be a philanthropist, with gifts of all sizes – from four $1 bills to $200,000 – making a meaningful difference for families working towards regaining security and stability.”

As in years past, longtime philanthropic partner The Patterson Foundation continued their generous support through matching opportunities, contributing $100,000 for every $500,000 raised by the community during the campaign. With no cap on the number of $100,000 contributions donors could activate prior to January 31, the community recognized the opportunity to strengthen their charitable giving and sparked six such contributions totaling $600,000, a first reached in The Patterson Foundation’s decade-long history of support.

“COVID-19 continues to prove life-altering for many who have lost their stability amid its wide range of challenges,” says Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. “The Patterson Foundation believed in our region’s givers at this crucial time, incentivizing their participation in Season of Sharing through these match opportunities. Witnessing their generosity activate The Patterson Foundation’s largest Season of Sharing contribution to date is Fantabulous, well beyond a WOW!”

Notable gifts from the Charlotte Community Foundation, Manatee Community Foundation, and William G. and Marie Selby Foundation also expanded the regional campaign’s relief efforts across county lines, from Parrish to Punta Gorda.

This collaboration across foundations and sectors is also reflected in the vast network of human services organizations that work directly with those in need. Individuals or families needing support can contact 2-1-1 or any human services program to request assistance in the four-county region.

While fundraising for the campaign officially runs from early November to the end of January, donations to Season of Sharing can be made throughout the year at any level. Gifts can be made online at www.cfsarasota.org/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. Gifts from Donor Advised Funds are also accepted. All donations are tax-deductible. There are no administrative fees and 100 percent of gifts go to supporting people and families with timely assistance.

For 20 years, Season of Sharing has empowered neighbors to help neighbors overcome crisis, be it hurricanes, Red Tide, economic downturns, or even global pandemics. Built on collaboration and trust, the community-wide campaign is a partnership between the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Herald-Tribune Media Group, with giving strengthened by The Patterson Foundation. To read stories from families and individuals who have been helped by Season of Sharing, visit 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 $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.