

Be The One



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
of Sarasota County

NONPROFIT NEWS

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## Nonprofit News: December 2025

2026  
**GIVING  
CHALLENGE**  
Be The One

Presented by the  
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

*Save the Date!*  
**APRIL 15-16, 2026**  
**NOON to NOON**

Celebrating the 10th Giving Challenge

**This Is It! The Deadline to Register Your  
Nonprofit for the 2026 Giving Challenge Is This  
Month!**

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If you are hoping to participate in the 2026 Giving Challenge and you haven't yet updated your nonprofit's profile in The Giving Partner AND registered for the Giving Challenge, this is YOUR LAST CHANCE. The deadline to do BOTH is **noon on Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025**.

Here are the **TWO** steps you **MUST** take if you want to be a part of next year's Giving Challenge:

## Step #1: Make Sure Your Giving Partner Profile Is Updated

A key requirement to participate in the 2026 Giving Challenge is for nonprofits to have a complete, accurate, and updated profile in [The Giving Partner](#). Nonprofits **MUST** ensure that **ALL** updates are made by **noon on Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025**.

Not sure what you need to update your profile? [This checklist](#) includes all the details and documentation you will need to update your profile. Don't miss out on the chance to participate in next year's challenge!

[Learn How to Update Your Giving Partner Profile](#)

## Step #2: Register for the Giving Challenge

Once your Giving Partner profile is set, it's time to officially register with the Giving Challenge at [GivingChallenge.org](#). The deadline to register is **noon on Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025**.

**Note:** This deadline is **significantly earlier** than for past Giving Challenges. If your registration is not complete by the deadline, you will **not be eligible** to participate in the 2026 Giving Challenge.

[Register for the Giving Challenge](#)

## Upcoming Holiday Office Hours Schedule

Our Community Impact department holds regular weekly Zoom sessions for nonprofits from **11 a.m. to noon every Friday**. This is an **excellent opportunity to ask specific questions about the 2026 Giving Challenge** (as well as any other questions you may have about grants or grant applications).

There will be **two final Office Hours sessions** before the Giving Challenge deadline: **Friday, Dec. 12, and Friday, Dec. 19**. (There will be **no Office Hours on Friday, Dec. 26 or Friday, Jan. 2**, because of upcoming holidays.)

There's no need to pre-register for Office Hours. Just click the link below to join.

[Join Us for Office Hours](#)

## Upcoming Giving Challenge Training Opportunities

### Training #1: Giving Challenge Campaign Communication Planning

Strong campaigns start with strong communications. This practical online training session will **help you and your organization craft clear, compelling messages to use before, during, and after the 2026 Giving Challenge**. Learn how to create a streamlined

communications plan, tailor your messages for different audiences, and maximize your reach across social media, email, and other channels. You will also receive practical templates and a timeline to keep outreach focused and on track.

The training will begin at **noon on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026**, and will be led by [Jennifer Abbott, CAP](#), and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson Foundation** as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative.

[Register for the Jan. 21 Training](#)

## Training #2: Countdown to Impact

This hands-on session will guide participants through creating a detailed “run of show” for the big day, testing planned activities, and spotting potential gaps. You’ll also explore strategies to begin stewardship planning early—so **your organization is ready to thank, engage, and retain donors long after the 24 hours have ended.**

The training will begin at **noon on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026**, and will be led by [Victoria Finley, CFRE](#), and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson Foundation** as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative.

[Register for the Feb. 4 Training](#)

## Watch Past Giving Challenge Trainings Online

*All training webinars and support materials can be viewed at any time.*

In October, we hosted **"Set Your Organization up for Giving Challenge Success,"** an online training session for nonprofits looking to jump-start planning for their 2026 Giving Challenge campaigns. Led by [Josephine Eisenberg](#) and [Sara Leonard, MBA, CFRE](#), two consultants with **The Patterson Foundation** as part of its [Fueling Dynamic Fundraising](#) initiative, the session helped participants set realistic fundraising goals, determine the central focus of their campaigns, identify the right prize opportunities, recruit strong support teams, and align Giving Challenge activities with their broader fundraising efforts.

If you missed it, we strongly suggest watching our recording of it as you and your nonprofit begin planning your campaign for next year's challenge. You can also view the slideshow that accompanied the training [here](#).

[Watch the "Giving Challenge Success" Webinar](#)

Recordings of other Giving Challenge trainings, as well as support materials, will also be made available on [the foundation's YouTube channel](#) and [the Giving Challenge website](#) after they have taken place.

## Enter to Win Our Best Video Commercial Prize

*We're looking for great Giving Challenge commercials.*

We are continuing to accept entries for the 2026 Giving Challenge **Best Video Commercial** contest. We're looking for short videos (around 30 seconds) that tell a compelling story about a nonprofit's work and incorporate the Giving Challenge **"Be The One"** concept.

Winning videos can be produced in-house or professionally and they must meet certain technical specifications and be posted on either YouTube or Vimeo. See all details [here](#). The deadline to submit is **5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 30, 2026**. The **10 nonprofits** with the best videos will each win **\$1,500**.

[Enter to Win](#)



## Scholarship Application Period Opens Next Week

*Students under the age of 24 can begin applying Monday, Dec. 15.*

The Community Foundation awards approximately \$2 million in scholarships each year. Our next round of scholarship applications will open on **Monday, Dec. 15**. Here's what you need to know:

- This round of scholarships is for high school and college students 24 years old or younger
- Applicants must be residents of or high school graduates of schools in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, or DeSoto County
- Students can complete one common application for multiple scholarship opportunities
- Scholarships are available for accredited universities, community colleges, technical schools, and certification programs
- The deadline to apply is **Feb. 1, 2026**

[Find Out More About Scholarships](#)



## Animal Welfare Grant Applications Due Soon

*The deadline to apply is this Sunday.*

Our ongoing Animal Welfare grant cycle focuses on supporting organizations in the animal welfare sector in the following ways:

- Funding emergency veterinary treatments for urgent cases or extraordinary medical needs
- Supporting the purchase of large equipment, such as X-ray machines

Applications are due by midnight on **Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025**.

[Apply for Animal Welfare Grants](#)



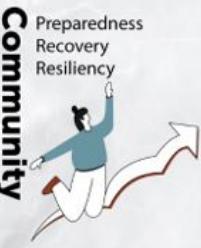
**Masala Giving Circle**

## Masala Giving Circle Is Currently Accepting Grant Applications

Masala Giving Circle is a group of more than 100 philanthropically minded African American women who are dedicated to creating positive change in communities of color. Masala's mission is to promote economic and personal empowerment through financial support for programs that benefit the underserved in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and Desoto communities.

Applications for 2026 Masala Giving Circle grants are currently being accepted through Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025. Learn more at the Masala website.

[Learn More About Masala Giving Circle](#)



## Inaugural 2026 CERT Summit: Rising Resilience, Ready Together

Thursday, January 29, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



THE PATTISON FOUNDATION

# Inaugural Community Emergency Response Team Summit Happens in January

Disasters don't just affect places. They impact people, families, and the organizations that hold communities together. That's why The Patterson Foundation invites you to attend the 2026 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Summit: ***Rising Resilience, Ready Together*** from **8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026**, at The Ora, 578 McIntosh Road, Sarasota.

CERTs are trained volunteers who assist their neighbors during emergencies—from checking on elderly residents and sharing accurate information to clearing debris, providing basic first aid, or supporting shelters until professional responders arrive. Their work shows how everyday people can make extraordinary differences when it matters most.

The free, day-long CERT Summit will bring together CERT members, County Emergency Management leaders, Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs), Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs), and nonprofit partners from across Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties to deepen collaboration and strengthen our region's resilience.

Whether you're an active CERT member, interested in starting a team, or simply passionate about helping your community prepare and recover together, this event is for you. **Please register and share this opportunity with your clients, neighbors, and those you serve to help shape a stronger, more prepared community.**

[Register for the CERT Summit](#)

## Nonprofit Job Bank

Whether you're seeking a new nonprofit position or you want to post an open position at your organization, your local resource is the Association of Fundraising Professionals Southwest Florida Chapter's [Job Bank](#), supported by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

[Browse the Nonprofit Job Bank](#)



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