COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Sarasota County

Nonprofit News

NOVEMBER 2026



Newtown Business Council and Community Foundation of Sarasota County Partner on Participatory Grantmaking Initiative

The **Newtown Business Council**, which works to support and empower local businesses in Sarasota's historically Black community of Newtown, recently awarded **$100,000 in grants** through an innovative partnership with the Community Foundation. The **two organizations collaborated** through a process known as participatory grantmaking, a philanthropic strategy in which local communities analyze community needs and determine where to best allocate charitable dollars in partnership with a funding organization.

During the Newtown Business Council's recent grantmaking process, the Community Foundation provided platforms for discussion and decision-making and technical support, while the council oversaw all decisions related to the grant application process and worked with community members to decide on which programs to support.

The process began with a series of grassroots community engagement events that asked **Newtown residents** to share their thoughts on their community's greatest needs and how nonprofits and funders should address them. While disaster recovery and resilience remained central to the initiative, the community-led

process also highlighted other pressing needs in Newtown, including healthcare, youth enrichment, and family stability.

“This process was about more than distributing grant dollars. It was an opportunity for people who know and care about Newtown to help determine how philanthropic resources can respond to the needs of Newtown,” said **Mary Butler**, the president and CEO of the Newtown Business Council. “Community members brought their lived experience, professional knowledge, different perspectives, and, most importantly, their commitment to the **people who call Newtown home**.”

Kirsten Russell, vice president of community impact at the Community Foundation, called the process a “model for how we want to serve our community going forward,” and the foundation is exploring ideas for how we might expand this strategy to other communities. Let us know how we might best implement this model of grantmaking in the future by emailing us through the button below.

Email the Community Foundation



Season of Sharing Returns With Continued Support From The Patterson Foundation

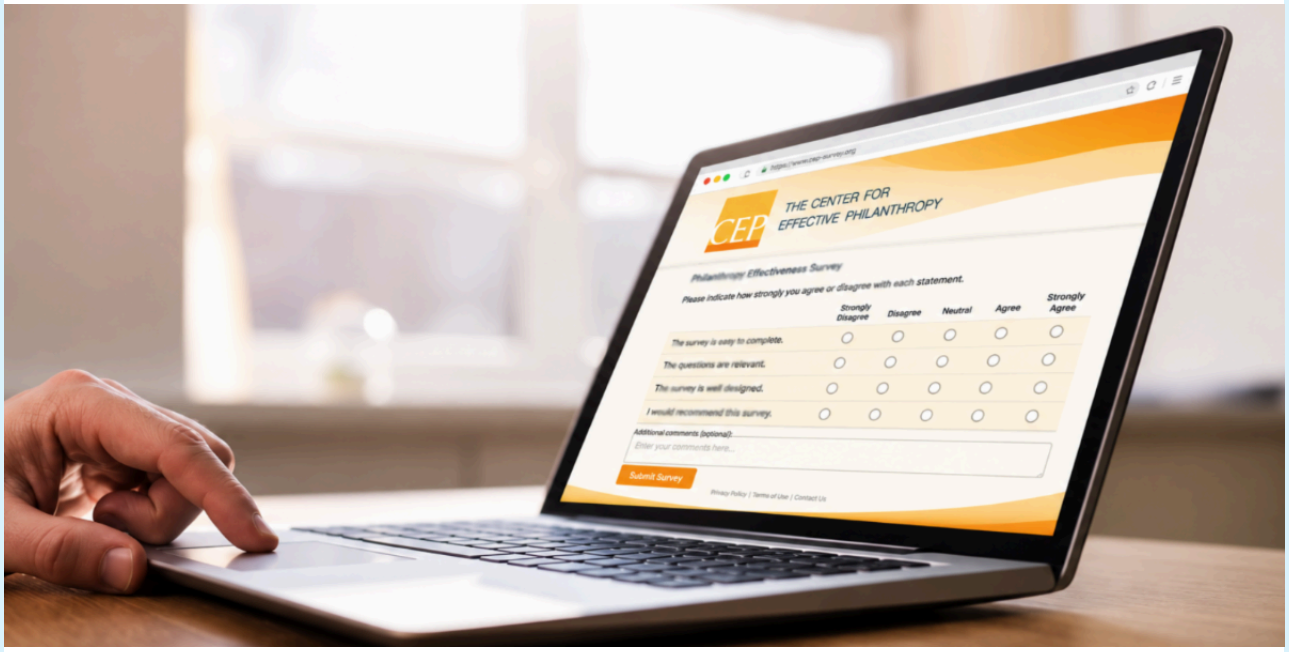
Season of Sharing, the annual campaign that provides temporary **financial assistance to families and individuals in crisis** in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties, returns for its 27th year. Created by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County in partnership with the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, the campaign helps residents cover basic expenses such as housing, utilities, childcare, and transportation.

The Patterson Foundation will continue to support community giving throughout Season of Sharing, contributing **$100,000 for every $500,000** raised by the community through Jan. 31, 2027. The Patterson Foundation has given more than $11 million in matching funds and other contributions to Season of Sharing since 2010, including $700,000 during last year’s campaign, which raised $4.2 million.

“Often, the greatest opportunity to create positive change is right here, in the communities we call home,” said **Debra Jacobs**, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. “Season of Sharing is **how our region takes care of its own**. When a family can stay in their home and keep the lights on, they retain their dignity, safety, and hope—all of which strengthens people with the affirmation that others care and they can move forward showing others that they care. Investing in the stability of our neighbors is an investment in the well-being of our entire region.”

Established in 2000, Season of Sharing has raised **more than $54 million** and assisted more than 57,000 households across the four-county region. The campaign has received more than 60,000 donations total, ranging in size from $5 to $1 million, and 100 percent of every gift goes directly to local families and individuals.

Learn More About Season of Sharing



Reminder to Recent Grantees: We’re Listening! Share Your Feedback.

If you received a grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County in the last fiscal year, you can help us shape our work with our nonprofit community by completing the **Center for Effective Philanthropy**’s nonprofit survey. All grantees from May 2025 through June 2026 should have **received a survey** and are eligible to participate.

Your feedback helps us understand needs and funding gaps in our nonprofit community and can **help shape our grantmaking strategies**. Responses are confidential: The center shares only aggregated results and does not disclose who responds. For technical assistance, contact the center directly.

To participate, look for the email invitation sent by the center’s John Rangos (survey@cep.org), on **Tuesday, Oct. 20**. Can’t find it? You may need to check your

spam folder to receive the message. The survey is open through **Tuesday, Nov. 17**.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Each year, the Community Foundation sets aside specific periods of time during which nonprofits can apply for different types of grants made possible by the generosity of our donors. Ongoing and upcoming grant cycles include:

- Ongoing through Dec. 1: **Sponsorship Grants**
- Nov. 15-Jan. 3, 2027: **Animal Welfare Grants**
- Dec. 1-Jan. 17, 2027: **Community Impact Grants**

Learn More About Grant Opportunities

Stories of Impact



Sarasota Orchestra Receives Strategic Partnership Grant

Read more **here**.



Dragonfly Mental Health Awarded Grant to Support Strategic Planning

Read more **here**.



Community Foundation Commits $400,000 to Resilient Shoreline Effort

Read more **here**.

Read More Stories of Impact

Have a story of impact you'd like to share?
Email it to communications@cfsarasota.org.

Upcoming Scholarship Opportunities

- Beginning Dec. 1: **Traditional Scholarships**

- For: students under 24 who live in or graduated from a high school in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, or DeSoto County and who are enrolling in the 2027-2028 academic year for an accredited professional certification or a vocational, college, or university program.

- Beginning Dec. 1: **Destinations Florida Dave Warren Memorial Scholarship**
  - For: incoming college juniors or seniors attending an accredited four-year institution in Florida and majoring in hospitality, tourism, events, and/or marketing.

Learn More About Scholarships

Office Hours

Our Community Impact department holds weekly Zoom sessions for nonprofits from 11 a.m. to noon **every Friday**. This is an excellent opportunity to ask specific questions about grants or grant applications that may affect your nonprofit.

There's **no need to pre-register**. Just click **here** to join.

Nonprofit Network



Nonprofit Network is a **Facebook discussion group** for nonprofit professionals in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties that is moderated by the Community Foundation.

The goal of this group is to provide an informal space for nonprofit professionals to **ask questions, share knowledge, and build community**, all with the goal of strengthening your organization so that you can better deliver on your mission.

Examples of common topics and themes include grant opportunities, webinars and trainings, consultants, free or discounted resources, general advice and questions, and much more.

Join Nonprofit Network

Nonprofit Job Bank

Whether you're **seeking a new 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

THE GIVING PARTNER

Stay Connected!

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