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enrich our region*



Our Mission

Community Impact Powered by Philanthropy

Our Work

We unite people and organizations to create opportunities for families across generations to improve their lives through cultural, educational, economic, and social support.

Every one of us has the potential to impact another person, a cause, a community.
Be The One.

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT/CEO

Dear Friends:

Change and growth are guiding our region's conversation about the future. From changing neighborhoods to demographics, the signs of this transformation are all around us, including in the rhythms of our daily lives. As we welcome new neighbors and acknowledge those who have long held roots here, the opportunities to broaden this conversation — and the voices taking part in it — are as abundant as they are necessary.

How can we maintain the quality of life that brought us all here, while not exacerbating the disparities that already exist as we recreate our post-pandemic society? It's a question of balancing interests regarding how we develop and how we thrive, and one that involves local thinking, local listening, and local change-making.

For more than four decades, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has played a role in bringing assistance — and new ideas — to the ever-evolving needs of this beautiful place we collectively call our home. We've done so only with the trust and altruism of our donors, who continually inspire and encourage us to improve the lives of all people and create opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.

Knowing who we serve is key to how we listen, learn, and bring perspectives to the forefront and build relationships where voices have been historically left out of the conversation. While the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our traditional ways of coming together, our commitment to convening, connecting, and collaborating has never been stronger, and will continue to be enriched as our community grows not just in size, but in diversity of viewpoints, people, ages, abilities, races, and ethnicities.

This takes time, as does fostering a difference of opinions and having the patience to consider new thoughts. Whether they are sparked in personal

discussions or large gatherings, these conversations are actively taking place between individuals, families, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and civic institutions, spurring actions that are bringing us closer to a more inclusive community through philanthropy.

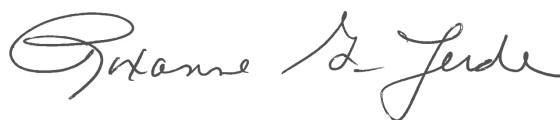
Throughout this issue you'll learn how three local nonprofits are reimagining literacy support for struggling readers from kindergarten to higher education through the Strauss Literacy Initiative (page 4). You'll hear more about charitable incentives, updates, and opportunities for year-end giving to strengthen causes close to your heart during this time of heightened need (page 8). You'll meet Bea Holt, Steve Rubin and Ed Town, and Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf, who are "paying it forward" and awarding scholarships that change futures and support students of all ages (page 10). And, you'll dive into a conversation with community thought leaders about how we all can create platforms for diverse thoughts, perspectives, and opinions (page 12).

As these stories remind us, trust is the necessary catalyst for change. We are privileged to have yours in this journey to ensure our community not only grows but thrives and builds a culture that embraces our entire community.

Gratefully,



Daniel DeLeo, Board Chair



Roxanne G. Jerde, President and CEO

REIMAGINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRUGGLING READERS OF ALL AGES THROUGH THE STRAUSS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Editor's Note: *In-depth research and exploratory pilot programs are guiding the Strauss Literacy Initiative, a collaborative effort managed by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, to help identify and intervene with learning differences so students of all ages can access much-needed resources. Strategic partnerships and grantmaking with an evolving group of partners will support these efforts. The Strauss Literacy Initiative aligns with the Community Foundation's longstanding commitment to education work, including the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a national movement to empower children to achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade.*

For many, there's comfort curling up with a good book — the feeling of thumbing through its pages, the glimmer of understanding when reading a particularly stirring passage, and the recognition in someone else experiencing life the way you do.

But for children with dyslexia and other literacy learning differences, books can bring feelings of stress rather than comfort. A paragraph may look like a jumble of mixed-up words, each letter shifting on the page. The act of reading becomes a course of obstacles resembling an algebraic math equation, a sea of figures with a meaning almost impossible to comprehend.

What these students often struggle with most is the fear that they are different and somehow lesser. While they watch some of their peers take to reading easily, they feel left behind. But they are not alone. Roughly 20% of the population has dyslexia, according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. And yet, tragically, only 5 percent of them have been formally diagnosed.

Patricia “Patti” Strauss was one of the undiagnosed 95 percent. A giving and thoughtful woman, Patti spent much of her life wondering why she had such trouble reading. It took decades for her to receive a diagnosis: dyslexia, sometimes known as “a specific learning disability.” She and her husband, Ira, vowed that no child would go through the confusion that she had.

That's why they earmarked a generous fund — named the Ira and Patricia Strauss Fund For Children's Literacy — focused on early identification of literacy learning differences through the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, with guidance from estate attorneys Ric Gregoria and Colton Castro at Williams Parker, and the Strauss' longtime financial advisor Michael White at RBC Wealth Management.

This Fund powers the vision and partnerships behind the Strauss Literacy Initiative, which so far has had great reach, from the classrooms of Visible Men Academy to the hallways of St. Mary Academy to the disability centers of State College of Florida. Students as young as Kindergarten to those just beginning their college careers are all grappling with how to navigate their learning differences. Many are now finding solutions to the problems that have challenged them for years.

Visible Men Academy

At Bradenton's Visible Men Academy (VMA), the focus is early identification. While all of the school's 81 Kindergarten through fifth graders were screened in some way for literacy issues, the post-screening interventions are centered on those in Kindergarten.

These students took literacy assessments last spring that resembled a computer game but offered



For the first time in the school's history, Visible Men Academy is screening many of its 81 Kindergarten through fifth grade students for literacy issues. In this photo, a Kindergarten student takes a literacy screener alongside Kindergarten teacher Tanisha Knight.

real-time results on the students' reading performance. In total, three out of 11 Kindergartners were identified as requiring additional reading services. And that discovery alone — three years earlier than the typical age of diagnosis in third grade — is a success.

"I'm glad they're starting early," said VMA Kindergarten teacher Tanisha Knight. "I've always wondered, ever since I've been in education, why we wait until they get to third or fourth grade before we try to do something for them?"

Part of early identification means transforming our understanding of dyslexia. Typical warning signs include flipping letters, but teachers at VMA are learning that the disability can encompass so much more than that.

"I had a student that told me the letters were all over the page when he was reading," Knight said.

Both Knight and resource specialist Jacqueline Hinds, who is leading the literacy project at VMA, see a bright future for students who target their literacy learning differences early. They hope these results will ultimately bolster their self-confidence and understanding in the classroom.

"Once the teachers know what's going on, the parents know what's going on, everyone comes together and can help the child be successful," Knight said. "That child is going to feel some form of success."

But VMA's staff can't work in a silo. The work is going to be done among the students, their families, and their teachers. Hinds hopes the early recognition will get everyone on board.

"I'm hoping that not only will we relieve the kids, but the families," she said. "The parents will say, 'Oh, okay, so this is what's going on.'"

continued...

St. Mary Academy

When students come to Sarasota's St. Mary Academy, they often come with an idea that they have a learning difference. The school is intended for those with special needs. The question for them is what's next: how do they move from identifying their problem to thriving?

The administration at St. Mary Academy knows one thing: it's absolutely a team effort. As of this year, many of the school's teachers have now received Orton-Gillingham training, one of the leading learning methods for students with dyslexia. That means the school's educational professionals are in tune with each other — and their students.

What makes Orton-Gillingham different is its multisensory approach: it combines touch, visual, reading, and kinesthetic modes. Sometimes, that variety can be enough to trigger a different pathway in a student's brain.

"Once the body gets a different way to bring those letters into the brain, it takes it to a different level," said the school's speech and language pathologist, Katie Rierson. "So they feel it and then they know it and then, all of a sudden, they can do it."

In Mr. A.J. Scheip's third-grade classroom, students used their fingers to trace sounds in kinetic sand in a particularly energizing lesson. And while these activities might start small today, they can have a big impact on the way students see themselves.

"Many times students who have come to us have met with years of failure, and they're frustrated," said St. Mary Academy counselor Tammi Peters. "It's about building them back up and finding their strengths. It's knowing that if you're struggling with reading, it doesn't define who you are — it's a piece of who you are."



With support from the Strauss Literacy Initiative, students with specific learning disorders have received scholarships to succeed at St. Mary Academy in an environment conducive to their needs.

State College of Florida's Disability Resource Center

At State College of Florida's Disability Resource Center, the first question coordinator Patricia Lakey asks students - many young adults or parents themselves — at State College of Florida's Disability Resource Center is: "Tell me about your disability?"

"These students are self-referrals who enter with some knowledge of their learning differences. They often have an individualized educational plan from high school. But so many of them have little information about the specifics of their reading disability," added Lakey.

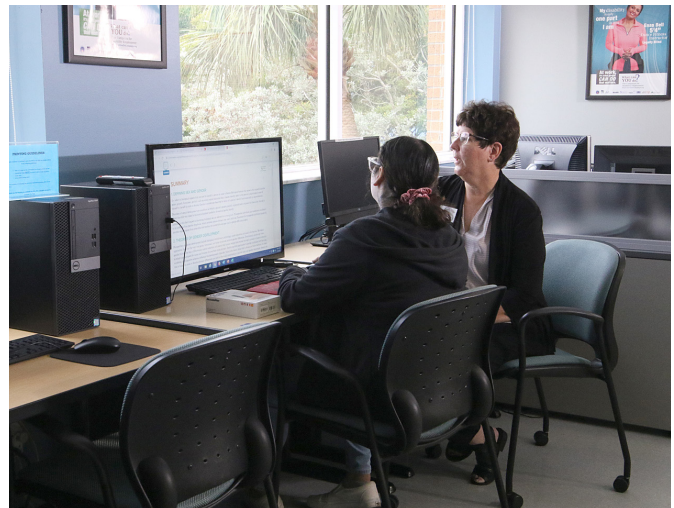
To Lakey's inquiry, many will answer: *'I'm just not good at reading. I've always been a slow learner. It takes me a while to read things.'*

Students do not have a clear understanding of why they struggle and most importantly, what accommodations and technology is available to help them here at SCF, according to Lakey.

When Lakey was approached by the Community Foundation, she wondered how best she could help these students. They needed to have an expansive understanding of their learning disability, and available supports. They also needed tangible tools to improve their learning experience.

Her solution is a three-pronged treatment plan with enough initial funding to guide 15 students. It begins with a full evaluation by a psychologist to pinpoint their learning difference and offer recommendations. A consultation then follows where the student gets an explanation of the results from a detailed report.

Students are given an iPad, keyboard, and wireless earphones that enable them to use their new screen reading technology to listen to textbooks, read articles, navigate websites, and complete assignments.



Yadira "Yadi" Martinez Ayala, a freshmen at State College of Florida, reviews her latest assignment with Mary Hoffman, Accommodation and Assistive Technology Specialist at the Disability Resource Center.

Photo courtesy of the State College of Florida.

The goal is for these students to have help in the classroom without standing out, according to Lakey.

More importantly, she wants these students — who have spent years feeling that they simply weren't good at reading or couldn't succeed in school — to grow their self-confidence as young adults. She wants them to come from this program with an understanding of who they are and how they can flourish. Empowering students to employ compensatory strategies builds self-confidence and provides the foundation to move forward with their educational goals with the understanding and resources to be successful.

"When I ask about reading, I can see it in their body language. I've had people say, 'I get frustrated because I'll read a whole page and I don't understand anything that I just read,'" she said. "You don't do math every minute of your day like you do reading. Reading is the crux of education." 📖

“Students as young as Kindergarten to those just beginning their college careers are all grappling with how to navigate their learning differences. Many are finally finding solutions to the problems that have challenged them for years.”

RESPONDING TO HEIGHTENED NEEDS THROUGH YEAR-END CHARITABLE GIVING

As local nonprofit organizations continue to respond to heightened needs across all sectors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, charitable dollars are crucial in supporting and strengthening these ongoing efforts.

As you plan your end-of-year giving, consider these charitable incentives and updates. Always talk to your tax advisor before making any substantial charitable gift.



Betsy Pennewill
Corporate Counsel
941.556.7152
Betsy@CFSarasota.org



Jay Young
Vice President, Philanthropy
941.556.7178
JYoung@CFSarasota.org

The CARES Act

Whether you itemize on your income tax return will determine which charitable incentive you should consider taking under the CARES Act.

Itemizers can deduct up to 100% against their adjusted gross income for cash gifts contributed to public charities in 2021. Please consider making a cash gift to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County's trusted Season of Sharing, which for more than 20 years has been providing a vital safety net assisting more than 35,000 families and individuals with the immediate basic needs necessary to stay in their homes and regain stability. You may also make a cash gift to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County to create a designated fund to benefit certain named charities over a course of time or to a scholarship fund to provide educational support to individuals.

For those donors who do not itemize on their tax return, individuals and married couples filing jointly can each claim a \$300 above the line deduction for cash contributions made to public charities.

Please note, to take advantage of these charitable incentives, the donor is prohibited from making the contributions to a donor advised fund or to a supporting organization.

The CARES Act charitable incentives expire on December 31, 2021.

IRA Rollover Gift or Qualified Charitable Distributions

You may contribute up to \$100,000 from your IRA required minimum distribution (RMD) to a public charity as a qualified charitable distribution. While you will not receive an income tax deduction in 2021 for making an IRA gift, your benefit will be not having to report the amount of the RMD gift on your 2021 income tax return.

Please consider contributing from your IRA required minimum distribution (RMD) gift to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County to support Season of Sharing or to create a designated fund to benefit certain named nonprofit organizations over a period of time for much needed support or a scholarship fund to provide educational support to individuals.

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

Gifts of appreciated stock that you have held for more than a year allows you to deduct the full fair market value on the date of the gift without paying capital gains tax. The gift may be contributed to a donor advised fund which can be applied over time to support nonprofit organizations and charitable causes you care about.

Making a large gift of appreciated stock in 2021 would allow you to take advantage of “bunching” your gift. For example, you contribute stock (valued at more than \$12,550 if you file as an individual or \$25,100 if you file jointly) to your donor advised fund in 2021, itemize your deductions, and receive a tax deduction for the full gift on your 2021 tax return. In 2022, take the standard deduction and use your donor advised fund to make 2022 annual gifts.

Real Estate Gifts

Before listing real property for sale, please consider gifting such real estate with which you hold a low-cost basis to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. There are certain tax benefits available to you, provided you convey, or “gift,” the property to the foundation before listing and before accepting a contract from a third party.

The real estate proceeds may benefit a donor advised fund to be distributed over time to support nonprofits organizations and charitable causes you care about. Qualified appraisals will be required at the time of the gift and provided by the donor.

For Business Owners

As a business owner, exit planning can be a daunting task. In many cases charitable planning can play a powerful role in the sale of a business, provided it is considered at the onset of conducting the due diligence to seek potential buyers. A donor advised fund created at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County to accept an assignment of your business interest could serve the dual purpose of providing immediate tax benefits at the time of the business sale while providing the flexibility to give to causes your care about for years to come.


Gifts of Certain Charitable Assets and Deadlines

Cash donations:

- Credit card contributions should be made by **Friday, December 31, 2021**.
- Checks sent via U.S. Postal Service must be **postmarked** on or before **Friday, December 31, 2021**.
- Checks sent via FedEx must be physically **received** at our office on or before **Thursday, December 30, 2021**.
- IRA checks must be **received** no later than **Monday, December 27, 2021**.

Gifts related to investments should be coordinated through Laura Spencer, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, by calling 941-556-7132. Publicly traded stock gifts must be **initiated** by **Monday, December 27, 2021**.

Mutual fund share gifts must be **initiated** by **Monday, December 13, 2021**.

Real Estate Gifts and Assignments of Interests in Closely-Held Business should be coordinated through Betsy Pennewill, Corporate Counsel, by calling 941.556.7152. Qualified appraisals will be required at the time of the gift and provided by the donor. 

PAYING IT FORWARD: SCHOLARSHIP DONORS MOTIVATED BY LIFE EXPERIENCES TO CHANGE FUTURES



Through the generosity of donors like Bea Holt (left), Steve Rubin and Ed Town (center), and Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf (right), scholarships are supporting students to create a future they have only just begun to dream of, bringing hope and optimism to learners of all ages.

When Bea Holt was in her mid-30s working as a nurse in Philadelphia, she dreamed of a career in business. With her employer's financial support, she enrolled in night classes and received her degree in Business Administration at age 37. That enabled her to land a job in the insurance industry, putting her on track for a successful career.

Steve Rubin has been a set and costume designer for theater, opera, and dance companies in New York City, Sarasota, and elsewhere. He attributes his accomplishments in part to his experience at Yale University, where scholarships helped fund his education.

As a teenager, Lou Oberndorf had the opportunity to meet John F. Kennedy, then a U.S. Senator, when the future president spoke at his Seattle high school. It was an inspiring experience that has stayed with him throughout his life.

Decades later, these personal histories of educational opportunities spurred Holt, Rubin and his spouse Ed Town, and Oberndorf and his wife Rosemary to “pay it forward” by establishing scholarship funds through the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

This year, the Community Foundation awarded over \$2 million from 87 scholarship funds to help 495 students pursue their dreams of higher education. While many of these scholarships derive from legacy funds left by donors who have passed away, some donors like those described here find emotional rewards in funding scholarships during their lifetime. And while many are targeted at high school seniors, 40 different funds – like Holt's Fair Haven Fund – are for adult learners who are at least 24 years of age.

Holt is motivated to help people, like herself, who want to return to school, whether it is to pursue a bachelor's degree or learn a new trade to enhance their future job

“This year, the Community Foundation awarded over \$2 million from 87 scholarship funds to help 495 students pursue their dreams of higher education.”

prospects. For example, the first scholarship from the Fair Haven Fund went to a firefighter who dreamed of becoming a paramedic to obtain a higher paying job and better support his children.

“Hopefully I can change other people’s lives and help them achieve their goals,” Holt says. “A few thousand dollars can sometimes have a big impact.” Holt points out that many jobs in expanding fields like computer repair and medical coding require training that can be expensive. “I like to have opportunities to support adult learners in ways other than the traditional four-year degree track,” she says.

Rubin and Town’s scholarship reaches another type of non-traditional student. The Edward L. Town and Steven B. Rubin Theatre and Performing Arts Scholarship Fund is open to students pursuing professional training programs as well as four-year degrees in the performing arts. They are particularly pleased that the latest recipient is seeking a career similar to Rubin’s—she will study set/projection design at Carnegie Mellon University.

Rubin notes he wasn’t a great student, and that academic grades and test scores aren’t necessarily predictors of success for careers in theater, opera, music, and dance. “We had to develop different yardsticks for our scholarships,” Town says. “The talents you need to be a singer or a designer or a dancer don’t necessarily line up with academic achievement.”

Town, who describes himself as “a professional audience member,” says when he and Rubin learned about the Community Foundation’s scholarship program, they realized that they could contribute to the future of the performing arts by supporting the educational goals of aspiring artists during their lifetime. “I know what it takes to get educated [in the performing arts] out there in the real world,” Rubin says. “I got a couple of scholarships from Yale and wouldn’t have made it through without them so I know how important they are.”


While their fund will continue after their passing, the couple takes pride in watching the career development of their scholarship recipients. “Why let the money just sit there when we could see what it could do?” Town asks. “There’s something very gratifying about seeing your dollars in action.”

Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf too have experienced the joy of supporting educational opportunities for two decades by underwriting scholarships at several institutions. When Lou Oberndorf heard that the Community Foundation was providing tickets for outstanding high school students to attend Ringling College Library Association Town Hall lectures, which feature talks by world leaders, creators, thinkers and doers, he recalled his meeting with JFK and was inspired to create a scholarship with a unique twist.

“He came up with the idea of enriching the Town Hall experience for the students by giving them the opportunity to go backstage to meet the speakers,” Rosemary Oberndorf says. “He also had the idea of a scholarship that was based not only on academic and leadership accomplishments, but also on writing an essay based on the lecture.”

In nine years, more than 1,000 graduating seniors benefitted from meeting with notable speakers, and 135 of them received Lou and Rosemary Town Hall Scholars college scholarships totaling \$270,000. The program came to a close this year due to COVID-19 safety protocols designed to protect the speakers, which would have limited key elements of the program: student interaction and engagement.

Lou Oberndorf hopes to find another way to work with the Community Foundation to provide opportunities for students to meet thought leaders, as well as financial assistance.

“I’m determined that we replace this program with something like it,” he says. “We aren’t done yet.” 

COMMUNITY VOICES: CENTERING THE DIVERSE THOUGHTS, PERSPECTIVES, AND IDEAS THAT ENRICH OUR REGION

Editor's Note: This article was inspired by the insights shared during a Fall 2021 session of "Community Voices," a series of virtual panel discussions that was created in 2020 by our foundation to bring together experts from nonprofit and community organizations to discuss our community's evolving needs and opportunities. A recording of this program and other sessions are available at www.cfsarasota.org/media-center/community-voices

Bold ideas are enriching our community's desire to connect and come together once again. Regional leaders and nonprofit organizations are engaging those they serve on a deeper level, in ways that use new technology and tried-and-true tactics to create spaces for diverse thoughts, perspectives, and opinions.

The motivation to unlock the potential of these ideas is informed – and powered – by community outreach. In a virtual conversation with donors and community members, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County invited three nonprofit partners connecting people and ideas through unique mediums.

Panelists highlighted how the rapid adoption of technology through the pandemic and an urge for traditional, in-person connections strengthened their outreach, but in different yet complimentary ways, enhancing their work to come. Their ideas reflected both a way to connect with those closest to our region's greatest challenges and engage generous individuals, families, and organizations to drive solutions.

While each organization's mission has a different focus – be it about the importance of diversity and racial justice in the arts, the inclusion of LGBTQ+ communities, or the realization of an outdoor public space for all people – each has an aim to build a more equitable community.

"A Sanctuary for Growth and Acceptance"

Donna Hanley

Board Member, Project Pride SRQ

Celebrating, uniting, and supporting our region's LGBTQ+ community has been a mainstay of Project Pride SRQ since its inception in 2019. So when the idea arose to engage in conversations linking local LGBTQ+ perspectives with those of their peers, Project Pride turned to digital platforms and everyone's favorite Sunday pastime – brunch – to educate and entertain.

Over the course of 12 episodes aired monthly, "The Brunch Show" has welcomed local leaders and community members, including allies, to catalyze 'aha' moments that get past unconscious biases and build respect for one another's humanity. From health care to animal welfare, the series highlighted challenges and experiences that every community could see themselves in (say, mental health needs during the pandemic) and addressed issues specific issues for the LGBTQ+ community (such as end-of-life planning for same-sex couples). In the process, "The Brunch Show" created a virtual sanctuary for awareness, growth, and acceptance.

As the show's more than 58,000 viewers experienced, the most meaningful outcome for members of our local LGBTQ+ community, in Hanley's words, is "the happiness of seeing someone like themselves on screen." Feedback and thoughts shared on "The Brunch Show" will guide Project Pride SRQ's next steps, ensuring that representation will continue to be wide reaching and welcoming.



The “Community Voices” discussion featured (pictured from left to right) Donna Hanley, a Board member, Project Pride SRQ; Jeannie Perales, Chief Experience Officer at The Bay Park Conservancy; and Michele Des Verney Redwine, Executive Director of the Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative. The conversation was moderated by Mercedes Soler, President and Co-Owner of Solmart Media and a board member of the Community Foundation.

“Diversity is About Inclusion”

Michele Des Verney Redwine

Executive Director, Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative

The voices shared through the arts are calling out to be heard and understood, not just seen. Through The Arts & Racial Justice Discovery Series, the Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative is expanding this call to action into the realm of public discussion, exchanging ideas, pulling back the veil on sensitive issues, and helping others realize the work they must undertake moving forward.

Since January 2021, four panel discussions have invited hundreds of guests to think critically about race related to the visual, performing, and digital arts – and systemic issues within them – through the lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusion. “Diversity is about inclusion, and inclusion must be the full community coming together,” said Redwine. “If we don’t communicate and talk about these issues, we are not going to learn.”

Most recently, in October 2021, the conversation highlighted the Black experience in the arts in higher education alongside students, young people, and leaders of local colleges and universities. This is one step along Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative’s journey to expose more people – especially children and families who are part of Black communities – to the arts throughout their life, not just during their education. These panels are only the beginning and, as Redwine shares, stand as “an opportunity to open an awareness to let others know to do more.”


“Coming Together on Common Ground”

Jeannie Perales

Chief Experience Officer, The Bay Park Conservancy

Nearly half a decade of input about the many aspirations residents have for Sarasota have informed the vision of The Bay Park Conservancy: to build a 53-acre park along Sarasota Bay that will be open and accessible for all. “Common ground – that’s how we think of this park,” said Perales, “as a place to come together.” Since its inception, engaging our region’s constituents has been key to refining the park’s purpose and development. Now, that heritage of feedback is being employed to activate programs on the waterfront site.

Over the years, this outreach has taken the form of more than 174 presentations and listening sessions, and three comprehensive surveys, the most recent of which focused on activating the park’s pilot activities. Across platforms both in-person and digital, and offered bilingually in English and Spanish, this survey garnered 2,500 responses in three months by establishing a visible presence at communal spaces, including Sarasota Public Libraries and Newtown Farmers Market. Some of the input was expected, while others shared ideas – from play spaces to historical preservation – that The Bay hadn’t anticipated but could implement in the years to come.

When asked how our community could be more inclusive of differing perspectives, Perales shared, “It comes down to humility and curiosity – being curious about who is out there and what is out there, and not judging them. When it comes to listening to diverse voices, we need to hang our ego up and open our eyes, mind, and heart.” 

LEADERSHIP

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National and Local Accolades Recognize Our Commitment to Financial Stewardship and Operational Excellence



Excellence. Accountability. Impact.™

Through a rigorous peer-reviewed process conducted by the Council on Foundations, the Community Foundation has been awarded **re-accreditation with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations®** for an additional three years. Executed with rigor and expertise, the National Standards® accreditation exemplifies the highest standards of operational excellence and integrity in community philanthropy, and remains a voluntary effort ensuring accountability and compliance above and beyond legal requirements. The Community Foundation has earned this recognition since 2006, one year after the accreditation's inception.



The Community Foundation has also earned an “exceptional” **4-star rating on Charity Navigator**, the highest attainable from the independent nonprofit evaluator. Indicating an adherence to sector best practices, this designation verifies that the Community Foundation exceeds industry standards and outperforms other charitable organizations in its area of work, specifically across two performance metrics: Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.



Additionally, the external acknowledgements of excellence were supported by the Community Foundation's recognition as **a top employer in the region**. Hosted by the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, the newspaper's annual Best Places to Work in Sarasota-Manatee awards program identifies and recognizes the region's very best employers. The Community Foundation of Sarasota County has been named a top employer through the program since 2018.

“

Receiving these accolades reaffirms the invaluable trust so many generous individuals place in us, as well as our responsibility to serve our entire community at the highest level of care,” says Roxie Jerde, President and CEO of the Community Foundation. “Alongside our donors and nonprofit partners, our commitment to building a region where everyone can thrive remains unwavering as we help solve problems for long-term generational change, today and in the future.”



Presented by the
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

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APRIL 26-27 • NOON TO NOON

How will you **Be The One?**

The Giving Challenge is an exciting 24-hour online giving event connecting 700+ nonprofit organizations with passionate donors to support diverse causes and create enduring impact in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties.

Since 2012, the Giving Challenge has acted as a catalyst for connection and provided more than \$59 million in unrestricted funding over seven challenges.

Learn More [**GivingChallenge.org**](https://givingchallenge.org)

