



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contacts:**

Mark S. Pritchett, President | CEO, Gulf Coast Community Foundation  
850.212.6797; [mpritchett@gulfcoastcf.org](mailto:mpritchett@gulfcoastcf.org)

Teri A Hansen, President | CEO, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation  
941.223.1755; [thansen@barancikfoundation.org](mailto:thansen@barancikfoundation.org)

### **GULF COAST, BARANCIK FOUNDATION AWARD FIRST GRANTS FROM COVID-19 RESPONSE INITIATIVE**

#### **Funding Provides Immediate Relief for Healthcare, Counseling, Job Losses, and Basic Needs While Foundations Continue Working with Safety-net Agencies to Prepare for Coming Demands**

VENICE, FL (April 7, 2020) – Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation have awarded the first grants from their COVID-19 Response Initiative.

The foundations have issued 11 grants totaling more than \$220,000 to relieve strain on key health and human-service organizations that are aiding residents hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic. Services supported include emergency childcare for first responders, rental assistance for families recovering from homelessness, and virtual healthcare for high-risk patients.

Meanwhile, the foundations continue working closely with these and other lead safety-net agencies to prepare for a wave of cascading needs yet to emerge from the crisis.

“These grants—and many more we have in the pipeline—are what I call ‘quick hits,’” said Teri A Hansen, president and CEO of Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation. “They give some of our strongest nonprofit partners what they need right now to continue their critical work, even as their own staffs and revenues are affected. We will continue working with them to prepare for the intermediate and long-term challenges yet to come.”

At Harvest House, for example, which provides supportive housing for hundreds of Sarasota County residents overcoming homelessness or addiction, dozens of clients lost jobs or had work hours slashed in a matter of days. A grant to buy laptop computers for staff is allowing case managers to continue counseling vulnerable residents remotely, while their desktop computers have been repurposed for safe use by those same clients for job searching and other needs.

CenterPlace Health, which offers primary healthcare to Medicaid patients, received funds to quickly transition to a telehealth model. “Telehealth will allow us to continue providing care to all of our patients—especially our pregnant moms and babies,” said Melissa Parker, president and CEO of

CenterPlace Health, which cares mostly for women and children. As the healthcare provider of last resort in the county, CenterPlace also serves many patients with multiple chronic conditions, who are especially susceptible to COVID-19.

A grant to SKY Family YMCA has enabled it to offer professional childcare to emergency responders and other essential healthcare personnel. These front-line workers have seen demand for their services increase at the same time that school closures leave them with no safe place for their children during the day.

“Right now, we are seeing unemployment spike as thousands of hard-working, low-income residents lose their jobs and face losing their homes,” said Mark Pritchett, president and CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. “Our first responders and healthcare workers and their families are straining under the pressure of this pandemic. Our initiative aims to be both nimble and strategic, easing pressures now while also weaving a stronger safety net for the more systemic issues our region will face.”

Pritchett noted that the foundations modified their grant processes so staff can more quickly receive, review, and assess funding requests. The ability to turn around grants quickly, sometimes in less than 24 hours, enables them to meet needs in real time.

The first grants awarded through the foundations’ COVID-19 Response Initiative include:

### **Healthcare**

**CenterPlace Health - \$20,000** to continue providing primary care to Sarasota County’s underserved and uninsured, including pregnant mothers and children, through telehealth services. Virtual visits will ensure patients continue to receive care without risking exposure to the coronavirus or putting clinical staff at risk.

**First Step of Sarasota - \$26,000** to ensure high-risk individuals in addiction recovery can continue to access counseling, therapy, psychiatric services, and other supports through telemedicine. The grant will fund laptop computers so clinicians can work remotely with patients.

**Multicultural Health Institute - \$5,000** to expand its health information outreach in the Newtown area to vulnerable populations most at risk for COVID-19. MHI works closely with the elderly and those with chronic disease such as diabetes, hypertension/heart disease, cancer, and HIV/AIDS.

### **Basic needs**

**Family Promise of South Sarasota County - \$25,000** for rent assistance to help low-income families who have overcome homelessness remain stably housed during the crisis. Many families served by the agency have lost jobs in industries hit hard by the pandemic, while the trauma of their past experience would make a return to homelessness devastating.

**Harvest House - \$4,650** to buy laptop computers so staff can transition to remote work and continue to provide case management for residents overcoming homelessness or addiction. Their desktop PCs also will be reconfigured for safe use by those same clients for job searching and other needs.

**HOPE for North Port - \$500** for food-pantry assistance at Hope Community Church, one of the few food distribution sites in North Port, where demand has doubled and clients are traveling from as far as Lee and Manatee counties. This grant comes from the Helen K. Hadden Memorial Endowment Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

### **Jobs and Financial Security**

**Women's Resource Center - \$21,500** to provide women critical counseling sessions and social support through enhanced telecommunications. Reemployment counseling is expected to be one of the biggest demands since WRC has been forced to move to all virtual programming.

**Gulfcoast Legal Services - \$1,000** to support software for securely transmitting sensitive client data via email. The technology will help the agency continue providing pro bono legal aid to vulnerable populations for issues such as domestic violence, housing evictions, financial insecurity, and immigration services.

**Capital Good Fund - \$30,000** to launch a new Crisis Relief Loan program that provides highly flexible, low-interest loans to Sarasota County residents most at risk from predatory lenders. The loans include a "pay it forward" component, as repaid principal and interest rolls back into the loan fund so more loans can be funded to help other families in crisis. This grant is funded through Gulf Coast's Financial Sustainability Initiative Fund.

### **First Responders**

**SKY Family YMCA - \$50,000** to provide childcare for essential healthcare and emergency-response employees. As demand for the roles of first responders increases and school closures have left no place for their children to go during the day, childcare has become one of their greatest needs.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota County - \$40,000** to launch its First Responder Program to provide free childcare to local first responders employed by Sarasota County Fire Department, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, and Sarasota Police Department