

Community Foundation of Sarasota County awards more than \$1 million for hurricane recovery

Herald-Tribune

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County recently awarded \$1,050,046 through its Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund to 17 nonprofits that support individuals who have faced hardship in the wake of Hurricanes Ian, Debby, Helene and Milton.

“Last year’s hurricane season left our community reeling – destroying homes, shuttering workplaces and leaving a lasting impact on people’s mental health,” said Kirsten Russell, the Community Foundation’s vice president of community impact. “This new series of grants will provide a boost to nonprofits that are on the front lines helping people in our region recover as the community gears up for another potentially devastating hurricane season.”

Many of the grants will go toward providing mental health support services for hurricane survivors, while other money will be used for home repairs and other rebuilding assistance. The spending comes from the foundation’s Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund, which was created in partnership with The Patterson Foundation in 2022 as Hurricane Ian made landfall. In the years since, the fund has raised nearly \$10 million for recovery efforts, with \$2.2 million in gifts from The Patterson Foundation and a \$500,000 matching gift from the Brian and Sheila Jellison Family Foundation, among other major gifts.

In addition to physical damage, the storms also took a major toll on residents’ mental health. Several of the new grants are aimed at supporting nonprofits that provide mental health services to people affected by the storms, including **Resilient Retreat, Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast, NAMI Sarasota and Manatee Counties, SRQ Strong, and the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County.**

Other grants will provide residents with disaster case management services through **United Way of Charlotte County, United Policyholders, and Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice**. Still others will go to help people repair their homes with the help of **Habitat for Humanity, United Way of South Sarasota County, EPIC Community Center, Awaken Outreach Center, and Truly Valued**.

The **Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County, the New College Child Center, and Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium** each also received grants to either repair damaged infrastructure or maintain temporary spaces while repairs are underway.

Bishop-Parker Foundation grant

Forty Carrots Family Center recently received a Bishop-Parker Foundation grant for parenting education for expecting and post-partum parents and infants.

Forty Carrots provides services at no cost to clients, and groups are supportive learning environments where parents can safely discuss the feelings, struggles, and accomplishments of being an expecting or new parent.

“Infants and toddlers are the most vulnerable to abuse and neglect, and infants experience the highest rates of maltreatment among children,” said Michelle Kapreilian, Forty Carrots CEO. “Forty Carrots offers its Parenting Education groups to pregnant and post-partum mothers and infants. All programming follows a Two-Generation Approach, engaging parents and infants together strengthening the relationship between parent and baby, ensuring the baby’s safety and optimal development.”