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JESSIE BALL DUPONT FUND, OTHER DONORS, RELAUNCH COMMUNITY SAFETY NET FUND AS NEED CONTINUES TO SOAR

JACKSONVILLE, Florida -- As the number of needy persons in Jacksonville continues to grow, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and other private donors have come together to reopen the Community Safety Net Fund, which sustains nonprofit organizations providing food, shelter and emergency assistance.

The trustees of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund have invested \$500,000 in the Community Safety Net Fund at The Community Foundation, announced duPont Fund President Sherry Magill during a news conference today.

Trustees of the Lucy Gooding Charitable Foundation Trust have contributed \$200,000 and other private donors have added another \$110,000 to the Safety Net Fund, The Community Foundation announced, bringing the total private dollars raised to date to \$810,000.

Mayor John Peyton announced that he will seek approval from the City Council to contribute \$100,000 in public funds to the Safety Net Fund.

"The residents in our community, like many across the nation, are facing very difficult economic times. It is my responsibility as mayor to aid in any way that we can and encourage others to follow suit," said Mayor Peyton. "It is my hope that this effort will help address the growing need in our city as we continue to work toward economic recovery for Jacksonville."

"We are grateful for the support of these donors and their recognition that this is an enduring economic crisis that is impacting thousands of Jacksonville individuals and families," Magill said. "This is the greatest recession since the Great Depression and it continues to wreak havoc on our community. We must continue to support those organizations that are struggling to help the most vulnerable among us."

The Community Safety Net Fund originally was established in December 2008, as the effects of the economic recession began to be felt. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund created the fund at The

Community Foundation with a \$1,000,000 gift, which was matched by \$500,000 from private donors and \$100,000 from the City of Jacksonville. By summer 2009, all of those funds had been granted out to 14 organizations providing food, shelter and emergency assistance to those in need in Jacksonville.

Earlier this year, however, it became apparent that need in Jacksonville was continuing to grow.

Between the first quarter of 2009 and the first quarter of 2010, the number of unemployed in the Jacksonville metro area increased by more than 22,000¹ -- even though unemployment rates nationally were leveling off.

The number of food stamp recipients in Duval County jumped 39% between January 2009 and January 2010, according to data from the Department of Children and Families, Northeast Region. In March 2010, a record one in six Duval County residents - more than 140,000 people - was receiving food stamps.

Similarly, the number of homeless in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties jumped 10 percent between 2009 and 2010, according to the Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition.

"The extent of this need continues to place an enormous burden on the nonprofit organizations that provide a lifeline for those in need," said Magill. "We feel a responsibility to help these nonprofits stay strong, so that they can help our citizens stay strong.

"This is a long-term issue and our community's economic and civic health is at stake. We are seeing fundamental changes in our economy that will make it difficult to return to full employment."

Many economists see the current challenges continuing for some time.

"Because of uncertainty as to the strength of the economy, higher foreclosure rates in Jacksonville, and firms using labor-saving technologies, I don't expect much of a change in the unemployment rate in the area in the next year," said Carol Dole, associate professor of economics at Jacksonville University.

"Most of the jobs lost will not come back in their past form. ... For those who have lost jobs, the longer duration continues to cut into their skill set, and the likelihood that their previous training is obsolete (or less up-to-date). And this means that they'll probably have to accept a lower wage, at least to get back in the job market. "

For now, the nonprofits serving those in need report steady or increasing demand. The Community Foundation, which provides all back office support for the Safety Net Fund and administers the grantmaking in partnership with the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, has received requests for \$1.2 million in assistance from those organizations eligible for support from the Community Safety Net Fund.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor

To help meet that need, the Community Foundation will accept contributions to the Community Safety Net Fund through August 1, 2010. To learn how to contribute, visit the Foundation's website - www.jaxcf.org .

"We urge Jacksonville donors, large and small, to support the Community Safety Net Fund and the nonprofits that help those in need," Magill said.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund makes grants to more than 330 eligible organizations identified by Mrs. duPont in her will. The Fund has assets of more than \$265 million and has awarded \$291 million in grants since 1977.

The Community Foundation in Jacksonville works to stimulate philanthropy in order to build a better community. The oldest community foundation in Florida, it has assets of \$141 million.

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