



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northeast Florida funders activate Relief Fund

Fund poised to accept contributions to aid those affected by Hurricane Dorian

Jacksonville, Fla. (Aug. 30, 2019) – Northeast Florida philanthropic leaders and the City of Jacksonville are once again prepared to manage Florida’s First Coast Relief Fund to assist organizations helping those in Northeast Florida affected by Hurricane Dorian.

“As we find ourselves preparing for another storm, our City and nonprofit community stand ready to serve our citizens,” said Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry. “My administration and our great City employees are hard at work preparing for potential impacts and readying response and recovery efforts. This fund and the organizations it supports play a critical role in helping to address many individual and family needs after a storm.”

United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund joined together in 2016 to establish the Relief Fund to help those impacted by natural disasters. The Relief Fund stands ready to accept contributions that will help meet Hurricane Dorian-related immediate, unmet response and recovery needs.

"As we prepare for Hurricane Dorian and anticipate the potential impacts, our thoughts turn to our neighbors and those who are still struggling to recover from the last storm," said Michelle Braun, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida. "That is why we are activating the fund; we want to be ready. The fund has proven to be the most effective way to coordinate donations to support response and recovery efforts."

In response to Hurricane Irma in 2017, donors generously contributed more than \$3.79 million, which was awarded to 34 organizations that helped more than 253,000 individuals or households recover. About \$240,000 remain in the fund, which is available for immediate response efforts during this storm. Two initial grants will be disbursed to the American Red Cross Northeast Florida Chapter and The Salvation Army Northeast Florida Area Command.

“Florida’s First Coast Relief Fund is a remarkable example of the power of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector in times of crisis – and all year long,” said Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. “This community has a long history of supporting those in need, and we are proud to join forces once again with these leading organizations to support our affected neighbors.”

"As we've witnessed in years past, we know the generosity in and beyond Northeast Florida is extraordinary and essential for repairing and rebuilding our community," said Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "Through this fund and generous donors, thousands of people can be helped."

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund will make grants only to organizations helping individuals impacted by natural disasters in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. The fund will provide resources to meet needs not covered by insurance, FEMA, or other state and federal programs.

All distributions from the Relief Fund are overseen by a committee comprised of representatives of United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville, the City of Jacksonville, and other major donors.

"Once again, 100 percent of all gifts will go to relief effort," Braun said. "These dollars will be immediately available to help with response to Hurricane Dorian. Any unspent dollars will remain in the fund to maintain a permanent disaster relief fund for Northeast Florida."

"This will be the third major storm in four years to hit St. Johns and Putnam counties," said Melissa Nelson, president and CEO of United Way of St. Johns County. "So many families across our region battle personal storms every day. Unexpected crises like hurricanes exacerbate their struggles. Thanks to this collaboration, Florida's First Coast Relief Fund will be prepared to meet critical needs quickly and allocate funds to where they are needed most."

"While we all hope Dorian's impact is not severe," said Alan Margolies, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville, "it's important we have the means and mechanisms in place to assist as soon as possible."

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST RELIEF FUND

Online: unitedwaynefl.org/relief-fund

Text: STORM to 50503

By check: Pay to the order of United Way of Northeast Florida and mail to P.O. Box 41428, Jacksonville, FL 32203-1428

** Be sure to note "Florida's First Coast Relief Fund" on the check.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

Only nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Applications will be available online at unitedwaynefl.org/relief-fund and on each partner website once the response begins.

HOW TO ACCESS EMERGENCY INFORMATION

A comprehensive list of emergency contacts is available here: unitedwaynefl.org/emergency
United Way's 2-1-1 is a free information and referral hotline available 24 hours, seven days a week to connect callers to emergency resources, including disaster-relief efforts.

About United Way of Northeast Florida

Founded in 1924, United Way of Northeast Florida has earned a reputation as a respected and efficient philanthropic organization. United Way envisions a community of opportunity where everyone has hope and can reach their full potential. Because change doesn't happen alone, United Way's mission is to solve Northeast Florida's toughest challenges by connecting people, resources and ideas. The nonprofit organization's long tradition of addressing the human-service needs in Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau and Northern St. Johns counties is made possible through the commitment of thousands of volunteers, donors and community partners. To learn more, visit unitedwaynefl.org or follow @unitedwaynefl on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About United Way of St. Johns County

United Way-SJC fights for the health, education of financial stability of every person in Putnam and St. Johns Counties. For over 60 years, this has been done by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources to focus on community problems that matter most. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. www.unitedway-sjc.org

About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Florida's oldest and one of its largest community foundations, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 55th year, the Foundation has assets of \$384 million and has made \$500 million in grants since 1964. For more information: www.jaxcf.org.

About the Jessie Ball duPont Fund

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund works to expand access and create opportunity by investing in people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont. The Fund has assets of \$285 million and has awarded more than \$371 million in grants since 1977.

About the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville

The Jewish Federation of Jacksonville is a fundraising organization supporting the members of our community and providing for health, education and welfare, and ensuring the dignity of life. For more information, visit jewishjacksonville.org.

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