



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than \$2 million pledged to Northeast Florida COVID-19 relief

Initial \$405,000 in emergency grants awarded to 12 local nonprofits

Jacksonville, Fla. (March 26, 2020) – In the midst of a historic public health crisis, Northeast Florida donors have generously pledged more than \$2 million to Florida's First Coast Relief Fund to support immediate needs caused by COVID-19 disruption.

To help those most affected by COVID-19 disruption, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida, United Way of Northeast Florida and United Way of St. Johns County re-activated Florida's First Coast Relief Fund.

"I don't know where to turn now that my hours have been reduced to nothing," said a local mother of four children who was seeking help from a Relief Fund grantee. "I don't know how we are going to make it."

For so many families who are now facing unemployment, reduced hours at work, lost wages and tips, mounting bills to pay and scarcity of everyday resources, the Relief Fund is serving as a critical safety net. Families who were already at the tipping point before the pandemic are now living in survival mode. The assistance they receive through the Relief Fund helps them stay housed and buy food.

Twelve nonprofits in Duval, St. Johns and Nassau counties already received a total of \$405,000 to provide relief and resources to families throughout the region and the agencies that serve them. The first round of grants focused on immediate needs of shelters and those providing emergency food and financial assistance.

The recipients include: Barnabas Center, BEAM (Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry), Catholic Charities (Jacksonville), Catholic Charities (St. Augustine), City Rescue Mission, Clara White Mission, ElderSource, Feeding Northeast Florida, Jewish Family & Community Services, St. Francis House, Sulzbacher and Trinity Rescue Mission.

"Trinity Rescue Mission has seen donations and other revenue streams to be very vulnerable right now," said Gary Judd, the Jacksonville shelter's executive director. "The coronavirus has put an incredible stress on the homeless community and on those who help to serve them. We have seen increased direct expenses, including staffing, transportation, food cost and supplies. Florida's First Coast Relief Fund has allowed us

to continue to operate and those who are most vulnerable in the city to be cared for during times of uncertainty.”

With support from the Relief Fund, Trinity Rescue Mission has been able to increase its services, including isolating its most vulnerable population at a separate location; take extra recommended steps to help the homeless, including social distancing and hygiene; and actively collaborated with other providers across the city to meet overall community needs.

“This is exactly what Florida’s First Coast Relief Fund is designed to do – it ensures Northeast Florida nonprofits can continue their critically important work helping our most vulnerable populations in this time of increased need,” said Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. “We’re grateful for the support of so many individuals, businesses and foundations who are helping shore up the resources available to those in our community who need them most.”

The Fund was able to deploy these much-needed grants due to the generous and immediate support from local foundations, corporations and individual donors. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund trustees pledged \$500,000 to support the Relief Fund, the largest single gift to date for COVID-19 relief.

Major funders who have committed to the Relief Fund for COVID-19 thus far include:

- Jessie Ball duPont Fund: \$500,000
- Shad Khan of the Jacksonville Jaguars: \$400,000
- Jim Moran Foundation: \$250,000
- Weaver Family Foundation Fund: \$250,000
- Lucy Gooding Charitable Trust: \$150,000
- The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida: \$100,000
- GuideWell/Florida Blue: \$100,000
- Riverside Hospital Foundation: \$50,000
- Zimmerman Family Foundation: \$50,000
- Wells Fargo: \$40,000
- DuBow Family Foundation: \$25,000
- Robert and Margaret Hill: \$25,000
- Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida: \$25,000
- VyStar Credit Union: \$25,000
- Anonymous: \$25,000

More than 50 additional donors have made generous gifts totaling \$44,000.

“We live in an incredibly generous community, and in times of crisis like these, it truly shines,” said Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. “Because of our community’s generosity, the nonprofit sector is bolstered and individuals will get the help they need. Florida’s First Coast Relief Fund partners are

deeply grateful for the dollars raised thus far, and we urge others to step up to join us in this important effort.”

The needs are growing, and the calls for help are increasing. Nonprofit organizations can now apply for funding from the Relief Fund, and applications are being accepted online. Organizations can apply for help in the following categories:

- **Food assistance, non-food items and supplies** for agency and low-income individuals and families who are food insecure due to job losses, school closings, etc.
- **Short term housing assistance** to support shelters to safely distance residents and prevent the spread of COVID-19
- **Financial assistance** for individuals and families impacted by the crisis to help meet their basic household needs
- **Child-care support** for first responders and other frontline staff working to prevent the spread of the virus
- **Medical, safety supplies and equipment** for community-based service providers as they carry out essential community services
- **Technology support** for nonprofits to enable remote work and continued delivery of services

As with past relief efforts, the Relief Fund will be overseen by a grants committee and administered by United Way of Northeast Florida with 100 percent of donations going to nonprofit agencies.

"I want to say thank you to every group or individual who is personally stepping up for the people of Jacksonville during these uncertain times," said Shad Khan, owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars, in a press release Tuesday. "It's my privilege to help."

United Way's 211 call center, which provides information and referral services to more than 100,000 callers annually, has already seen a 20 percent increase in calls during COVID-19 disruption. For example, a 66-year-old Ability Housing resident and cancer patient who uses public transportation called 211 to find alternative transportation to his UF Health treatments because of his immune system vulnerability. United Way 211 connected that individual to a solution.

"In spite of stories of anxiety and uncertainty, we are also hearing so many stories of hope," said Michelle Braun, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida, which is administering the Relief Fund for the partnership. "This truly is what it's all about – coming together to help those who are struggling. We are honored to be among those making a difference during this difficult time and all year long."

Again, 100 percent of Florida's First Coast Relief Fund dollars will benefit local COVID-19 relief efforts. They will be granted to organizations providing direct services to individuals impacted by COVID-19 in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St.

Johns counties. The fund will provide resources to meet needs not met by government programs.

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund will remain open until needs stabilize and while funding is available. Applications are now open for nonprofits to apply for funding. To learn more, give or apply, visit unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response.

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HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST RELIEF FUND

Online: unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response

By mobile phone: Text COVID19RELIEF to 40403

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.

Application forms are available online at unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response and each of the partner websites.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Looking to share information on volunteer needs or find out how you can safely volunteer during COVID-19? Visit unitedwaynefl.org/volunteer.

GET HELP NOW

United Way's 211 hotline continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, and officials and community organizations are working throughout Northeast Florida to ensure crucial needs are met. Community members in need of assistance are encouraged to dial 2-1-1, where a team of information specialists are available 24/7. You can also dial 904-632-0600 to access a United Way 211 call center specialist. A COVID-19 information directory is available at unitedwaynefl.org/covid19resources.

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About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Florida's oldest and largest community foundation, 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 56th year, the Foundation has assets of \$482 million and has made approximately \$550 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 inclusive growth for the people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont. We engage in strategic placemaking for the most inclusive growth we can support in the communities specified in Mrs. duPont's will. We believe that nonprofit and public assets can support inclusive access, benefiting all members of a community and helping to strategically break down structural barriers to opportunity. Learn more at www.dupontfund.org.

Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida

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.

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 focuses on five causes: comprehensive basic needs, high-quality education, good health and well-being, financial security and social innovation. United Way'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

Serving both Putnam and St. Johns County, United Way of St. Johns is the only organization that brings together agencies, businesses, organizations, faith-based groups, government and individuals to focus on the community problems that matter most. Partners share the vision and have the energy, passion, expertise and resources to get the work done. For over 60 years, United Way-SJC has improved lives and built a strong, healthy community by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. Visit www.unitedway-sjc.org for more information.

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