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**For Immediate Release****Southwest Florida Community Foundations Receive \$375,000 from Governor Ron DeSantis to Assist with Hurricane Ian Rebuilding Efforts**

NAPLES/FORT MYERS/ PUNTA GORDA, Fla. (Nov. 17, 2022) – Governor Ron DeSantis presented the three area community foundations with a check for \$125,000 each in a special ceremony in Matlacha, FL, yesterday to assist in their shared goal of rebuilding Southwest Florida after Hurricane Ian.

Hurricane Ian left behind massive devastation in the tri-county area. 100,000 homes were impacted across the region. In Collier County, 27,434 members of households have registered with FEMA for assistance, Charlotte has had over 52,000 members of households also register with FEMA for assistance. The three foundations have collectively provided their communities with over \$6 million in immediate direct financial assistance, resources, and nonprofit funding.

Foundation CEOs Eileen Connolly-Keesler of the Collier Community Foundation, Sarah Owen of Collaboratory, and Ashley Maher of the Charlotte Community Foundation were present at the event along with Board Chairs Jim Morey, Dr. Aysegul Timur, and Kim Savasuk to accept the checks and be recognized for their hurricane relief plans by the Governor, DEO Secretary Dane Eagle, and Senate President Designate Kathleen Passidomo.

“We are thrilled to accept this check from Governor DeSantis and honored that the State of Florida recognizes our collective efforts to rebuild and restore Southwest Florida,” said Eileen Connolly-Keesler, Collier Community Foundation president and CEO. “In Collier County, we will focus on low-income developments with the greatest need. Our plan is to rebuild homes and elevate them with dirt fill, making them less susceptible to future storms. These generous funds from the Governor will go a long way in helping us reach our goals.”

“This unprecedented, collective donation came as a result of working collaboratively to raise vital funds for the immediate and long-term needs of the communities we serve,” said Sarah Owen, President and CEO of Collaboratory. “There’s a long road ahead of us, and Collaboratory is committed to the strongest recovery possible for Southwest Florida, supporting community organizations in rebuilding a more resilient region.”

“Governor Desantis’ efforts highlight the State of Florida’s continued dedication to its citizens, especially those affected by natural disasters. These funds will go a long way in helping our local community recover from Hurricane Ian and help us rebuild,” said Ashley Maher, Chief Executive Officer of Charlotte Community Foundation. “The lessons learned from previous hurricanes show us just how vital the direct injection of resources can be when managed efficiently at the state and local level. Our community will recover more quickly because of this. We are honored to be a recipient and to once again have the opportunity to stand alongside our partners in Collier and Lee to show collaboration strengthens our resiliency in Southwest Florida.”

This gift is especially significant as it arrives during National Community Foundation week, created in 1989 by former president George H.W. Bush, which recognizes the important work of



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community foundations throughout America and their collaborative and innovative approach to working with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Donations can be made to the three foundations at [colliercf.org](http://colliercf.org), [collaboratory.org](http://collaboratory.org), and [charlottecf.org](http://charlottecf.org). All contributions are tax-deductible. One hundred percent of the funds donated will be used to coordinate ongoing relief efforts to help people across the region recover from the impacts of Ian.

## **About The Foundation Partners**

### Collier Community Foundation

Collier Community Foundation™ is a tax-exempt, public, charitable organization established in 1985 to increase and focus on local private philanthropy. Today, the Collier Community Foundation manages more than 850 funds, works with hundreds of nonprofits, and has granted over \$268 million to nonprofit organizations, community programs, and scholarships. Informed giving. Powerful results.™ Learn more at [colliercf.org](http://colliercf.org) or call 239-649-5000.

### Collaboratory

Collaboratory is committed to coordinating the solving of all of Southwest Florida's social problems on an 18-year deadline including homelessness, poverty, mental illness, racism, illiteracy and more. We plan to do this with the entire community working together including people of all ages, colors, abilities, beliefs, and imaginations across all five counties.

Collaboratory was founded in 1976 as the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. It has made over 96 million in grants since then and is home to more than 650 philanthropic funds. To learn more and get involved, call 239-274-5900 or visit [collaboratory.org](http://collaboratory.org).

### Charlotte Community Foundation

Charlotte Community Foundation (CCF) envisions a community where all have equal opportunity to thrive. As a center for Philanthropy, CCF initiatives include grant-making and community partnership development, with an emphasis on higher education. The Foundation focuses exclusively on enhancing quality of life for Charlotte County residents and provides personalized donor services to help establish tax-advantageous charitable funds that support Charlotte County nonprofits.

The Charlotte Community Foundation was established in 1995, to serve the community as a 501c3, tax-exempt, public, charitable organization. The Foundation's mission is "Connecting People Who Care With Causes That Matter." To learn more on how your causes can lead to meaningful impact, visit [www.charlottecf.org](http://www.charlottecf.org) or by calling (941) 637-0077.

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