

Giving Challenge sets new records

In just 24 hours, the 2020 Giving Challenge generated \$18.4 million in gifts from 58,947 individual donors to 687 organizations in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto counties.

Organizations big and small benefited from the one-day blitz challenge, administered by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Patterson Foundation, which matches funds and awards prizes in order to encourage philanthropic donations. The 2020 Giving Challenge was held from noon-noon April 28-29.



PGSymphony principal cellist Ann Alton records Sarabande from Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G major in front of the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens' signature sculpture "Steel Palm" to share with symphony fans during the 2020 Giving Challenge.

Organizations specializing in feeding large numbers of people topped the leader board, according to results released by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota was first with \$365,984.78 in donations, with matching funds and prizes of \$252,252 for a total of \$621,236.78.

In second place was Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee, with donations of \$205,245 and prizes of \$90,225 for a total of \$295,420.

Smaller nonprofits were not left out. The Barrier Island Parks Society based in Englewood and Boca Grande raised \$38,430 from donors, added a Patterson match of \$28,130 and came out with \$66,560.

The Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast Inc. is helping the state of Florida purchase the 5,777-acre Orange Hammock Ranch in North Port, land that helps keep a wildlife corridor from the Peace River in Charlotte County to the Myakka River in South Sarasota County. The foundation brought in donations of \$31,181. When matched with the Patterson Fund's \$29,281, the total earned is \$60,462.

The Suncoast Humane Society, in the midst of a building campaign for a new shelter in Englewood, reported raising \$42,715, with \$22,400 coming from donors. The Englewood Animal Rescue Sanctuary raised \$15,370 from donors, got a Giving Challenge match of \$13,370 and would up with \$28,740.

The Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic in Port Charlotte raised \$15,865 from donors, matched with \$12,285 for a total of \$28,150. North Port Meals on Wheels brought in \$18,855 from donors for a

total of \$32,335. Englewood Helping Hand had \$10,835 in donations for \$20,870, and the North Port Coalition For Homeless Needy Children (Back Pack Angels) got \$5,385 in donations for \$10,370.

The Punta Gorda Symphony raised \$14,220 from 147 donors in the 24-hour time period. "We can expect an additional \$11,945 to be matched by The Patterson Foundation," the organization said in a statement. "If you are one of our dedicated patrons who gave, Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! From our main-stage performances to our youth education programs, and everything else in between, it's all made possible because of you!"

Several additional prizes will be awarded later in May in a variety of challenges. Nine prizes will be awarded for the best overall campaigns (pre-determined goals and strategies and other criteria) in the small, medium and large categories: \$6,000 for first place, \$5,000 for second place and \$4,000 for third place.

The many categories of all the special awards and winners will eventually all be posted online. Most are already online at: givingpartnerchallenge.org/leaderboards.

Editors Kim Cool and Chris Porter contributed to this story.