



Foundation Grants \$470,000 To Arts Groups In Response To Pandemic

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our regional economy has hit arts and cultural organizations among the hardest. To help key nonprofit arts groups weather this crisis, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has awarded \$470,000 in new Arts Appreciation Grants to 10 of the region’s cornerstone arts organizations. The emergency grants, approved by the foundation’s Board on Tuesday, represent an unscheduled second round of the foundation’s arts grants program during its current fiscal year—effectively doubling its investment in these organizations at a uniquely difficult time.

“This pandemic hit at the very height of the performance and fundraising season, so the blow has been devastating for our region’s signature arts and cultural organizations,” said Mark S. Pritchett, President | CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. “By advancing this funding now, the Gulf Coast Board aims to provide these beloved institutions with needed cash flow as well as help energize their donor bases to lean in too at a time when support is needed most.”

Gulf Coast Community Foundation typically awards its Arts Appreciation Grants once a year to key arts and cultural partners. With minimal paperwork and wide flexibility in how the funding may be used, the grants are designed to let the organizations focus on what they do best: advancing their artistic missions. Gulf Coast awarded the same amounts to the 10 grant recipients

earlier in its fiscal year. The emergency round of Arts Appreciation Grants was quickly approved by the foundation’s Board in response to the unprecedented effects of the coronavirus pandemic. While Gulf Coast’s joint COVID-19 Response Initiative with Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation has prioritized funding for the health and human-service safety net, Pritchett said the foundation and its donors also recognize the acute needs across the entire nonprofit sector. He noted that The Sarasota Ballet, for example, not only had to cancel major revenue-generating performances and events, but also was helping to support a group of international dancers stranded here by travel restrictions.

“Since the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic increased dramatically a month ago, Gulf Coast and its donors have invested \$2.4 million in safety-net supports and vital nonprofit organizations,” said Pritchett. “Our donors’ gifts have gone to a variety of organizations, ranging from All Faiths Food Bank and Suncoast Humane Society to arts groups like Asolo Repertory Theatre.” The following Arts Appreciation Grants were awarded by Gulf Coast Community Foundation this week:

- Asolo Repertory Theatre - \$70,000
- Sarasota Ballet - \$55,000
- Sarasota Opera - \$50,000
- Sarasota Orchestra - \$50,000
- The Ringling Museum - \$50,000
- Venice Theatre - \$50,000
- Florida Studio Theatre - \$45,000
- Embracing Our Differences - \$40,000
- Venice Symphony - \$30,000
- Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe - \$30,000