PALM BEACH UNITED WAY MATCHES FIRST $100,000 PLEDGE TO CORONAVIRUS FUND; TWO NEW MATCHING GIFTS ANNOUNCED

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Within 72 hours the Town of Palm Beach United Way has raised $200,000 for its Coronavirus Emergency Fund, meeting two initial $50,000 dollar for dollar matching gifts from generous donors Christina Dennis and Danielle Moore. Now the United Way is working to meet two additional $50,000 matching gifts from supporters J. Ira Harris, through the J. Ira and Nicki Harris Family Foundation, and Jason Taubman Kalisman, through the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation.

“It’s clear the coronavirus pandemic is going to get worse before it gets better, and we must all do our part to help our neighbors during such trying times,” said Harris, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees. “Nicki and I hope this matching gift will inspire others to give what they can to meet the needs of the thousands of Palm Beach County residents who will be impacted by this virus.”

Added Kalisman, a member of the Board of Trustees: “Fear and anxiety are high right now, especially for vulnerable residents and workers worried about losing their jobs and their incomes. Josephine and I chose to offer this matching gift through the Town of Palm Beach United Way because we know the money will go to the people in our community who need help the most.”

The Coronavirus Emergency Fund will be dispersed to local nonprofits to meet the needs of Palm Beach County residents who are impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Several agencies have already requested funding for food, diapers, medical equipment and more.

“We continue to distribute food at six of our community pantries, but resources are dwindling,” said Ruth Mageria, executive director of CROS Ministries, a United Way partner agency. “We have already seen a significant increase in clients who have never needed to seek our services before. This crisis is unprecedented, and we anticipate the need for food will only increase in the coming months.”

Many organizations also need help funding childcare, mental health and financial assistance programs. United Way partner Center for Child Counseling has asked for help funding telehealth and telecommunications services to support children in need of counseling services during this difficult time.

“We know that issues like financial insecurity, food uncertainty, and times of high stress are exactly the factors that exacerbate issues, often resulting in spikes in child abuse and violence,” said Renee Layman, chief executive officer. “With so many families facing this kind of uncertainty on all fronts, we must ensure services to build resiliency, calm fears, and help our children through the storm.”

The Town of Palm Beach United Way has already received several calls from individuals in need of financial support as businesses continue to lay off workers in response to local,
state and national mandates to limit restaurant capacity and practice social distancing. The 211 Helpline, which receives funding from United Way, also reports an increase in calls from people who need assistance, need information and guidance, or simply need reassurance in this time of uncertainty.

“We are committed to supporting our community any way we can, but we need help,” said Board Chairman Mary Freitas. “Our partner agencies will face challenges for weeks and months to come. We’re relying on the Palm Beach community to help us address those challenges and in turn support the thousands of residents who will be affected by this crisis.”

To donate to the Coronavirus Emergency Fund visit www.palmbeachunitedway.org/coronavirus-emergency-fund or call 561-655-1919. Checks should be made payable to Town of Palm Beach United Way with “Coronavirus Fund” in the memo and mailed to 44 Cocoanut Row, Suite M201, Palm Beach, FL 33480.

Donations are tax deductible and 100% will go directly to local organizations delivering services to disadvantaged and under-resourced communities most impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

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