



Town of Palm Beach United Way

44 Coconut Row, M201
Palm Beach, FL 33480
561-655-1919

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Town of Palm Beach United Way needs help to meet new matching gift of up to \$75,000 for Hunger Relief Fund

For Immediate Release: January 8, 2021

Contact: Aleese Kopf, 561-655-1919 or aleesekopf@palmbeachunitedway.org

Palm Beach resident **Christina Dennis** is offering a dollar-for-dollar matching gift up to \$75,000 to help individuals and families struggling to put food on the table due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The gift will aid the Town of Palm Beach United Way's Hunger Relief Fund that was established last month to support local nonprofits struggling to meet increasing demand for food assistance from clients who have lost employment and income during the global health crisis.

"Thousands of Palm Beach County workers, especially those in service industries, have lost their jobs, are behind on rent and bills, and cannot afford the most basic necessity – food," said Dennis, a board member of the Town of Palm Beach United Way. "Many are asking for help for the first time in their lives. Our local charities are strained. They need help providing support to our neighbors who are barely making ends meet. I hope this matching gift helps encourage and provide that support."

Local food bank Feeding South Florida provided 125 million meals to South Florida families from March to December 2020 – nearly three times the amount of food provided during the same time the previous year. CROS Ministries' food pantries served more than 70,000 individuals in 2020, 31% of whom were children.

"We have seen on TV the long lines of people waiting for food in our community and all across the nation," said Ruth Mageria, Executive Director of CROS Ministries. "As I consider the numbers representing those who have received food assistance, I am reminded that each statistic represents an individual in need, many of whom have never visited a food program before."

For many local families, food distribution agencies have served as lifelines during the pandemic. Shella Dextra and her two children receive weekly assistance from The Glades Initiative. She said the assistance has been a blessing, and is helping her get her life on track.

"I want to go back to school and this help lets me focus on my goal instead of worrying where our next meal will come from," Dextra told The Glades Initiative. "I don't know what I would do without the help I am getting."

To date, the Hunger Relief Fund has more than 100 donations totaling \$326,000. The fund was established on December 10th with an initial \$100,000 matching gift from the Palm Beach Country Club, its foundation and its members. The match was met within a week. A \$50,000 matching gift from Gail and Alfred Engelberg was met by January 8.

"We are incredibly grateful for the humanitarian spirit of this community," said **Mary Freitas**, Board Chairman of the Town of Palm Beach United Way. "It's truly amazing to see so many people give back, and continue to give back, during a time when generosity and empathy are needed more than ever."

To donate to the fund visit www.palmbeachunitedway.org/hunger-relief. Or, make a check payable to Town of Palm Beach United Way with "Hunger Relief" in the memo and mail to 44 Coconut Row, Suite M201, Palm Beach, FL 33480.

Donations are tax deductible and 100% will go directly to local organizations distributing food to families in need. For more information call 561-655-1919.

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