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## Town of Palm Beach United Way and Community Foundation partner to provide \$342,000 to rebuild homes in the Bahamas

**For Immediate Release – Monday, December 9, 2019**

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The Town of Palm Beach United Way and the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties have combined funds from their respective Bahamas Relief Funds to rebuild homes in the Northern Abacos. Each organization will allocate \$171,000 to Northern Abacos Relief and Rebuild, a grass roots team formed through The Church By The Sea in Fort Lauderdale.

The combined \$342,000 grant will cover costs to repair homes with minor and major damage in five settlements located in the Northern Abacos: Cedar Harbor, Wood Cay, Mount Hope, Fox Town, and Crown Haven. The settlements, commonly referred to as “Little Abacos,” are home to a large population of the labor pool for the greater Abacos, a group of islands in the northern Bahamas about 180 miles off the South Florida coast. The settlements’ fishermen provide the majority of the seafood to the rest of the Abacos, particularly lobster.

“The power of this partnership shows how committed the Community Foundation remains in delivering a lasting impact in support of ongoing critical restoration efforts in The Bahamas,” said Bradley Hurlburt, president and CEO of the foundation.

Marie Reny, a ministry director and member of The Church By The Sea, said relief efforts have been scarce in the Northern Abacos following Hurricane Dorian. The settlements are located far away from major cities, have little tourism and few second home buyers, which means they are often overlooked by many support organizations, Reny said.

“The Church By The Sea and Northern Abacos Relief and Rebuild, along with all the hard-working, compassionate residents that will be directly receiving the benefits of the donated funds, are humbled by the level of generosity that the Palm Beach community and donors have provided in support of our local Bahamian neighbors,” Reny said. “With grateful hearts, we are committed to ensuring that all funds are used to help rebuild these communities with long-term support and lasting relationships.”

Town of Palm Beach United Way and Community Foundation funding will cover costs to replace and/or repair roofs, drywall, doors and windows for 153 homes in the five settlements. NARR has secured donations from other sources to cover transportation of materials and labor. A majority of workers will be local laborers who typically earn \$45 to \$85 per day, depending on skill level. The group has already started some repairs and expects to finish all the work by summer 2020.

Keith Beaty, co-chairman of the United Way's Bahamas Recovery Fund Committee, said the 7-member committee chose to allocate donor dollars toward the home rebuilding project because of the significant impact it will make to the Northern Abacos community.

"The communities in these areas are made up of residents who are primarily working people who are essential to the more well-known resort areas of the Abacos," Beaty said. "Many of them work multiple service industry jobs, including supplying seafood and working as guides to the resort communities of Green Turtle, Spanish Cay, Treasure Cay and the Abacos in general—all areas that many Palm Beachers enjoy visiting. Rebuilding these homes will have a significant impact on the recovery of this area. A habitable home allows families to stay on the island, continue working, boost commerce and return to their special way of life."

The Town of Palm Beach United Way started the Bahamas Recovery Fund in collaboration with the Town of Palm Beach in early September to support long-term recovery efforts in the Bahamas following the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian. The fund has since raised nearly \$690,000.

In October, the United Way awarded a \$125,000 grant to Man O War Relief Fund for the purpose of rebuilding the public dock in Man O War Cay. The Bahamas Recovery Fund Committee is in the process of finalizing grants that will exhaust the remaining fund balance.

To donate to the Town of Palm Beach United Way Bahamas Recovery Fund visit [palmbeachunitedway.org/hurricane-relief](https://palmbeachunitedway.org/hurricane-relief). Donations are tax deductible and 100% will go directly to long-term relief efforts in the Bahamas. For more information call 561-655-1919.

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