

The Secretaries' Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships 2014

Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Campaign Against Summer Hunger (CASH) & Cans 2014

Gulf Coast Community Foundation: This regional community foundation, together with its donors, transforms the region through bold and proactive philanthropy.

www.gulfcoastcf.org

Launched: 2013

Public Partners: Cities of Longboat Key, North Port, Sarasota, and Venice, Florida; Sarasota County Government; Sarasota County Schools; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Summer Food Service; and the U.S. Postal Service

After identifying a gap in student participation in summer feeding programs, Gulf Coast Community Foundation and All Faiths Food Bank met with Sarasota County Schools to analyze hurdles to feeding more students over the summer. The partners developed "CASH & Cans 2014," a 40-day food and fund drive, to address three issues: (1) lack of awareness about food insecurity, especially for children; (2) inadequate resources to sustain the food bank over the summer; and (3) the low percentage of qualified students receiving food assistance over summer break.

The partners that assembled to meet this challenge came from the public, private, and independent sectors. Sarasota County and its four municipalities passed resolutions promoting the campaign and conducted food drives. All fire stations in the county served as food-collection points, along with Goodwill Industries International retail stores. The sheriff's office, public hospital, and county staff championed food drives, and more than 150 businesses, faith congregations, and civic groups joined as community partners. Agreements with local newspapers and other media outlets generated timely announcements and ongoing coverage of the initiative. A local digital design firm was engaged to produce print, video, and social media campaigns, fostering participation beyond expectations. Sarasota County Schools, meanwhile, provided critical data on existing summer-feeding programs and is the key partner in executing the program enhancements fueled by the campaign.

CASH & Cans surpassed all goals, raising \$1.1 million and more than 766,000 pounds of food. Hunger awareness has reached levels previously unseen. The Food Bank has a sustainable funding source to ensure supplies last through the summer. Sarasota County Schools will expand summer feeding sites by 60 percent, extend a backpack program through the summer, and open new mobile and school-based food pantries. Collectively, these programs aim to reach an estimated 65 percent of students who qualify for free/reduced meals with food over the summer—up from less than 25 percent last year, and well above the 15 percent national average.

