



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **More than \$2 million pledged to local Irma relief effort** *Initial \$200,000 in grants awarded to Red Cross and Salvation Army*

**Jacksonville, Fla. (Sept. 13, 2017)** – On the heels of what is estimated to be the most destructive natural disaster to hit Northeast Florida in more than a century, over \$2 million has been pledged to Florida's First Coast Relief Fund to support immediate and long-term relief and recovery efforts.

Mayor Curry announced the pledges at a press conference Wednesday at 10:00 at the Legends Center. The Jacksonville Jaguars, several philanthropic organizations as well as local corporations have contributed funds totaling more than \$2 million for the Fund.

"Jacksonville and Northeast Florida have been through a lot in the last 72 hours," said Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry. "However, it's been inspiring to see how the people of this community come together in times of crisis. Florida's First Coast Relief Fund is a clear example of the generosity and volunteerism displayed by the people of this city."

Created in 2016 to aid with Hurricane Matthew relief and to establish a permanent disaster relief fund, Florida's First Coast Relief Fund is a strategic collaboration created by United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville.

"This collaboration of partners is a great example of the important role of the philanthropic and nonprofit sector in our community, which is the backbone of so many critical services," said Sherry Magill, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund

Major funders who have committed to the Relief Fund for Irma include:

- Jacksonville Jaguars: \$1 million
- Jessie Ball duPont Fund: \$250,000, plus a \$250,000 matching grant
- Mayo Clinic of Jacksonville: \$500,000 for Irma relief efforts with \$250,000 to the Fund
- Lucy Gooding Charitable Trust: \$200,000
- Florida Blue: has pledged \$1 million for statewide support with at least \$100,000 to this fund
- Additionally, Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, Mayo Clinic of Jacksonville, Baptist Health, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and United Way of Northeast Florida have all made commitments to the fund totaling more than \$300,000.

"Bringing individual donors, corporations and major philanthropies together is a great benefit for the community, because it efficiently focuses energy and efforts," said Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

This week, two emergency grants of \$100,000 each will be made to the American Red Cross Northeast Florida Chapter and The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida to help the organizations respond to the region's unprecedented needs following Hurricane Irma.

"These grants represent our immediate initial response," said Michelle Braun, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida, which is acting as fiscal agent for the Relief Fund. "Together with our partners, we are addressing urgent needs and will be distributing the funds quickly to where they are most-needed."

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund will make grants only to organizations helping individuals impacted by natural disasters in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. The fund will provide resources to meet needs not met by government programs.

In 2016, donors contributed more than \$652,000 to the Relief Fund in response to Hurricane Matthew. Sixteen local organizations providing relief services received grants totaling nearly \$500,000, leaving a balance in the Relief Fund of more than \$150,000 for future relief efforts. Those dollars are immediately available to help with response to Hurricane Irma, Braun said.

Once again, 100 percent of all gifts will go to relief effort. Any unspent funds will remain in the fund to maintain a permanent disaster relief fund for Northeast Florida.

All distributions from the Relief Fund will be overseen by a committee comprised of representatives of United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville, the City of Jacksonville and other funders.

"After the devastating impact from Hurricane Matthew last year and now Irma, many families are struggling to recover and will be for quite some time," said Melissa Nelson, president and CEO of United Way of St. Johns County. "Through this collaboration, we are able to meet critical needs and allocate the funds to where they are most needed."

"We are pleased to join again with Northeast Florida's strongest nonprofit funders in responding, this time, to Irma," said Alan Margolies, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville. "We are committed to supporting our community every day but, in times of potential crisis, it's more important than ever to come together."

The Fund also provides a vehicle for individual donors to contribute to disaster relief and recovery efforts, maximizing their contributions through matching funds from major philanthropies. Donations are now being accepted.

## **HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST RELIEF FUND**

Online: [unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund](http://unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund)

Text: STORM to 50503

By check: Pay to the order of United Way of Northeast Florida and mail to P.O. Box 41428, Jacksonville, FL 32203-1428

\*\* Be sure to note "Florida's First Coast Relief Fund" on the check.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING**

Only nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

Application is now available online: [unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund](http://unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund) and on each partner website.

## **HOW TO ACCESS EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

A comprehensive list of emergency resources is available here: [unitedwaynefl.org/emergency](http://unitedwaynefl.org/emergency)

United Way's 2-1-1 is a free information and referral hotline available 24 hours, seven days a week to connect callers to emergency resources, including disaster-relief efforts.

### **About United Way of Northeast Florida**

With a rich 93-year history, United Way of Northeast Florida has earned a reputation as a respected and efficient philanthropic organization. We envision a community of opportunity where everyone has hope and can reach their full potential. Our mission is to solve our community's toughest challenges by connecting people, resources and ideas. United Way's long tradition of addressing the human service needs in Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau and Northern St. Johns counties is made possible through the commitment of thousands of volunteers, contributors and community partners. Learn more at [unitedwaynefl.org](http://unitedwaynefl.org).

### **About United Way of St. Johns County**

United Way-SJC fights for the health, education of financial stability of every person in St. Johns County. For 60 years, this has been done by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources to focus on community problems that matter most. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. [www.unitedway-sjc.org](http://www.unitedway-sjc.org)

### **About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Florida's oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 53<sup>rd</sup> year, the Foundation has assets of \$343 million and has made nearly \$410 million in grants since 1964. For more information: [www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org).

### **About the Jessie Ball duPont Fund**

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund works to expand access and create opportunity by investing in people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont. The Fund has assets of \$285 million and has awarded more than \$371 million in grants since 1977.

### **About the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville**

The Jewish Federation of Jacksonville is a fundraising organization supporting the members of our community and providing for health, education and welfare, and ensuring the dignity of life. For more information, visit [jewishjacksonville.org](http://jewishjacksonville.org).

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