



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 15, 2022

Drug Free Charlotte County receives Gulf Coast Community Foundation funds for Kids Thrive! Collaborative Initiative

Drug Free Charlotte County is pleased to announce the award of a \$20,000 Community Grant. The funds will support the Kids Thrive! Collaborative, which helps pregnant women and new mothers of children born substance-exposed access necessary resources in the community. Drug Free Charlotte County is the lead in the collaborative, which includes Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition, The Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, the Florida Center's Healthy Families Charlotte County, and new partnerships with The Boys and Girls Clubs of Charlotte County and the Charlotte County Imagination Library. The grant is made possible by the Miriam P. Raines Charitable Fund, an endowment at Gulf Coast created to help women in Charlotte County educate themselves to further their life skills.

Funds will advance work with the Circle of Parents, part of the Kids Thrive Collaborative. Specifically, leadership skill development and support will be provided to a group of "mentor moms" who have stepped forward to assume responsibilities of leadership to help strengthen the organizational structure necessary to sustain and grow the impact of this successful peer support group. Helping build a supportive social network and empowering mothers with the skills and resources needed for their well-being, as well as that of their children, is at the heart of Kids Thrive Collaborative. We are deeply grateful for this support and honored for the opportunity to use it towards the empowerment of the women involved in Kids Thrive.

Drug Free Charlotte County was established in 2002 to address youth substance use. Focused on a foundation to "engage, equip and empower" the community, the organization works to promote healthy choices and support resiliency in children and youth. The work of the Kids Thrive! Collaborative provides the opportunity to support strong parent-child bonding, a key protective factor against later substance use. Learn more at DrugFreeCharlotteCounty.org.

For more than 25 years, together with our donors, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has transformed our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. Gulf Coast is a public charity that was created in 1995 through the sale of the Venice Hospital. Since then, we have become the philanthropic home of nearly 950 families, individuals, businesses, and organizations that have established charitable funds here. Together, we have invested over \$460 million in grants in the areas of health and human services, civic and economic development, education, arts and culture, and the environment. Learn more at GulfCoastCF.org.



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Figure 1: Moms gather at a recent Circle of Parents day at the park

