



SAVE THE DATE – PRESS CONFERENCE

Please join us for the public release of the ten-year plan to end homelessness in Sarasota County – **StepUp: End Homelessness in Sarasota County Now.**

WHEN:

Wednesday, December 21, 2011 at 11am

WHERE:

R.L. Anderson Administrative Building, 4000 South Tamiami Trail, Venice, FL

SPEAKERS:

Adam Tebrugge, Board Chairman Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness

Carolyn Mason, Sarasota County Commissioner

Lynette McClelland, Executive Director of social services The Center of Hope

Richard Martin, Executive Director Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness

StepUp: End Homelessness in Sarasota County Now

Community leaders and citizens have been working diligently for the past year to develop a Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness in Sarasota County. It began in January 2011 when the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness initiated a process to achieve a community consensus on goals and strategies to prevent and end homelessness in Sarasota County. Led by Sarasota County Commissioner Carolyn Mason and Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness Board Chairman Adam Tebrugge the six-month inquiry engaged more than 600 community members, including many people experiencing homelessness or who had once been homeless, in monthly community workshops in North Port, Sarasota, and Venice to learn about and address major barriers to preventing and ending homelessness in Sarasota County.

The last workshop was held in June and since that time a steering committee has worked tirelessly to compile the valuable input generated by the working groups and create a holistic long-term strategic plan to present to the public. These efforts were further fueled when The Gulf Coast Community Foundation awarded the Suncoast Partnership a \$50,000 grant to produce and begin implementing its plan.

Florida Journeys Communications was tapped by the Partnership to develop and create the brand identity for the Plan including design elements (logo, tagline, website, etc.), messaging, and the marketing/PR campaign. “Our goal was to shine a positive light on a challenging subject and create a brand that is uplifting and inclusive,” reflects Caroline McKeon owner of Florida Journeys Communications. Linda Kubecka’s logo design captures that essence and encourages all stakeholders to **StepUp** and be part of the solution

StepUp: End Homelessness in Sarasota County Now is currently being shopped to all stakeholders to get their feedback. The draft Plan includes goals and objectives, leadership, costs, and measurements to better coordinate and streamline efforts to prevent and end homelessness in Sarasota County. The five objectives are: 1) streamline systems countywide to develop, fund, implement, and monitor programs that address homelessness, poverty, and economic stability; 2) meet the immediate needs of individuals who are experiencing homelessness; 3) quick identification of individuals and families at risk of homelessness; 4) increase permanent supportive housing to accommodate individuals who cannot live independently and/or require long-term case management services, and 5) cultivate economic stability by creating “steps” toward self-sufficiency, permanent housing, and financial stability. Supporting these objectives are innumerable action steps that create a pathway to achieving this bold vision.

“This is a community Plan,” explains Richard Martin, Executive Director of the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, the lead agency for the Continuum of Care for the homeless in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. “If we are to achieve excellence in our mission, community members from across Sarasota County need to be engaged. Everyone is both an ambassador and stakeholder in its success.” Beginning in January 2012 the Suncoast Partnership will present the Plan for adoption by Sarasota County, municipal governments and other community stakeholders. “Sarasota County has a history of civic excellence. We are a united community that values quality of life for all citizens and we have the capacity to achieve the ambitious goals of the Plan.”

StepUp: End Homelessness in Sarasota County Now is a project of the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness

The mission of the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness is to prevent and end homelessness, promote community awareness, advocate for homeless people and those that provide services to them— and build a stronger community consensus to ensure that everyone has a safe, stable place to call home.

For more information contact:

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