



Local Foundations Launch Collier CARES Application for Families in Need

Naples, FL (March 31, 2021) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEP), founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, in partnership with the Community Foundation of Collier County and Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, announced the public launch of a specially designed application to serve the community’s most vulnerable populations.

Collier CARES (Community Application for Resources and Emergency Services) is a free and bilingual mobile and web application designed for the purpose of connecting people in need with the essential resources and services available in Collier County.

Over the past year, NCEP convened community leaders, stakeholders and service providers to identify the critical needs of the local community, which influenced the design of Collier CARES. The goal of Collier CARES is to connect families immediately with relevant resources and services to meet their needs on mobile and web platforms.

The app’s design is created for efficient searchability for its users. Families in need can search for services in 12 categories - Benefits, Crisis, Education, Food, Health/Wellness, Jobs, Legal, Mental Health, More, Shelter/Housing, Substance Abuse and Transit. Families also can search for services by keyword and filter their searches by what services are open now or serving specific populations. Users can connect with providers via email, phone and mapping capabilities.

The public can now access the application online at colliercares.org or by downloading the mobile app. Mobile downloads are available for iOS (App Store) and Android (Google Play Store) devices.

“NCEP is proud to partner with our fellow community leaders, stakeholders and service providers in Collier County to ensure that no family is without access to help when in need,” said NCEP Chief Executive Officer Maria Jimenez-Lara. “This program is especially important as our community continues to deal with the economic and physical impacts of the global health crisis.”

"We are proud to partner with NCEP and the Schulze Foundation to offer a digital app that helps our community discover services available to them and how to access those services," said Eileen Connolly-Keesler, President and CEO of the Community Foundation of Collier County. "This partnership will ensure that those who need it most can get help with the touch of their fingertips."

“This project is a significant investment for Collier County,” said Mary Beth Geier, Florida Director for the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation. “By collaborating with NCEF and the Community Foundation on the development of this unique tool, we are helping to create better systems for individuals and families looking for local resources. This resource is even more important and timely with the growing demand for services across multiple sectors.”

The approachable and relevant design of Collier CARES is due to the invaluable input and community perspective offered by members of the Collier CARES Taskforce: Caroline Brennan, MSW, LCSW, Supervisor of Mental Health Supports at Collier County Public Schools; Paula DiGrigoli, Executive Director of the NCH Safe & Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County; Thomas P. Felke, MSW, Ph.D., Florida Gulf Coast University Department of Social Work; Sergeant Tom Wedlock from the Collier County Sheriff's Office; and Madison Smith, Community Resource Coordinator, NCH Safe & Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County.

For additional information on Collier CARES, please visit colliercares.org or email admin@colliercares.org.

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About Naples Children & Education Foundation

The Naples Children & Education Foundation, the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and collaborative strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted over 50 of the most effective nonprofits in the community, providing more than 275,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time.

About the Community Foundation of Collier County

The Community Foundation of Collier County, now in its 35th year, is a tax-exempt, public, charitable organization established in 1985 to increase and focus on local private philanthropy. Today, the Community Foundation of Collier County manages more than 750 funds, collaborates with hundreds of nonprofits, holds \$250 million in assets and has distributed nearly \$200 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and community programs. The Community Foundation of Collier County is one of Florida's fastest-growing community foundations. For good. Forever. Learn more at cfcollier.org or call 239-649-5000.

About the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation

The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation began its work in 2004 with the charge from its founder to support transformational change for the benefit of mankind. The Foundation has consistently directed its primary efforts and resources toward matters of importance in human & social services, education, and health & medicine. It continues to do so today with a focus on investments that produce specific and measurable outcomes with a geographic emphasis on the Twin Cities (Minnesota) seven-county metropolitan area and the five counties of Southwest Florida which includes Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties. In all of its activities, the foundation embraces its founder's beliefs in the value of innovation and in improving the lives of middle- and working-class families.