



NEWS RELEASE

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SARASOTA TEACHERS BENEFIT FROM FIRST ROUND OF GRANTS BY THE BLUE FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY FLORIDA, INC.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Ten Sarasota County teachers will receive funds to develop innovative health education projects in 2002, thanks to a grant from The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, Inc. In its first-ever grant offerings, The Blue Foundation awarded \$5,000 to the Education Foundation of Sarasota County, Inc., for its Edge of Excellence program.

Edge of Excellence provides classroom funds to Sarasota County teachers to explore new techniques and develop education projects. In all, The Blue Foundation, the philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF), made grants to 16 non-profit organizations throughout Florida in its inaugural offerings.

"We're proud to support Sarasota's Edge of Excellence program and ensure that health education is both included and enhanced," said Susan Towler, executive director of The Blue Foundation. "Mini-grants to teachers have been shown to expand classroom horizons as shown by the continued success of the Edge of Excellence."

Towler said the inaugural grants, totaling \$925,000, were announced in December 2001, and represent The Blue Foundation's goal of providing caring solutions through grants that will educate, train and improve the lives of individuals and families throughout Florida.

The 16 programs that The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida is funding are rich in diversity, from educating older adults about prescription drugs, to training physicians on women's heart disease symptoms, to improving the lives of adolescents with diabetes. The organizations receiving the first grants are, by geographic area:

- Florida Academy of Family Physicians, statewide, \$24,000;

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The Blue Foundation
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- Sacred Heart Health System, Pensacola, \$118,938;
- Florida State University School of Nursing, Tallahassee, \$37,000;
- Baker County Council on Aging, Macclenny, \$32,076;
- MaliVai Washington Kids Foundation, Jacksonville, \$16,261;
- Hope Haven Children's Clinic and Family Center, Jacksonville, \$17,255;
- Community Asthma Partnership, Jacksonville; \$25,000;
- University of Florida Department of Surgery Trauma/Critical Care, Jacksonville, \$26,550;
- Cardiovascular Center at Shands Jacksonville, \$100,000;
- Seniors First Inc., Orlando, \$50,060;
- PACE Center for Girls of Pinellas County, \$81,000;
- Gulf Coast Community Care, Tampa Bay, \$67,110;
- Education Foundation of Sarasota County Inc., Sarasota, \$5,000;
- Diabetes Coalition of St. Lucie County Inc., Port St. Lucie, \$123,672;
- Family Central Inc., Fort Lauderdale, \$138,577;
- University of Miami School of Medicine Diabetes Research Institute, Miami, \$62,501.

"Almost 200 organizations applied for grant funding totaling \$24 million in requests," Towler said.

"We were pleased that there was so much interest in our goal to improve the health and well-being of uninsured and underserved Floridians." Following an initial review of all proposals, a team of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida employees made recommendations to The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida board of directors, which approved the final grant offerings.

Towler said The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida plans to distribute up to \$1 million in grants each year. Beginning in 2002, grants will be distributed twice a year in the spring and in the fall. The next request for proposals deadline is March 1, 2002. For information on how to apply for a grant from The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, contact the foundation office at (800) 477-3736, extension 63215.

The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida is a separate, philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida incorporated in the state of Florida. The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, and its parent, BCBSF, are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. For more information concerning The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, please visit its website at www.bcbsfl.com.