



Greg Luberecki  
Director of Communications and Public Relations  
[GLuberecki@gulfcoastcf.org](mailto:GLuberecki@gulfcoastcf.org)  
941.486.4608 | 301.466.9594 (mobile)  
GulfcoastCF.org

Jennifer Sams  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
[jsams@edfoundationsrq.org](mailto:jsams@edfoundationsrq.org)  
941.927.0965 | 941.281.9883 (mobile)  
[EdFoundationSRQ.org](http://EdFoundationSRQ.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE AIMING TO BOOST COLLEGE ACCESS, SUCCESS  
HAS NEW HOME AT EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA COUNTY**

VENICE, FL (November 20, 2018) – The local partners that have made Sarasota the number-one county in Florida for financial-aid completion rates will be led by a new organization.

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County will take the reins from the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce and assume coordination of Sarasota County’s Local College Access Network, or LCAN. The LCAN is a cross-sector group of education and youth services organizations and funders that is focused on increasing the rate of students who pursue a purposeful postsecondary pathway, particularly among those historically underrepresented in higher education.

Partners within the LCAN work together to coordinate and leverage resources in their community so more students can complete their education beyond high school. In addition to hosting FAFSA completion workshops, LCAN activities include elevating awareness of potential jobs, ACT/SAT test preparation, and college and career explorations.

“Our long-term vision is an integrated approach to education that blends college and career preparation with 21st century cognitive skills,” said Jennifer Vigne, president of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County. “With many of the LCAN’s strategies and objectives already embedded in our work, it makes perfect sense for Education Foundation of Sarasota

County to serve as the backbone organization for all of the incredible collaborative work being done by the LCAN's partners."

With the Education Foundation increasingly serving as a key organizer and partner in many LCAN activities, the transition to the coordination role was a logical next step for the successful initiative. The LCAN includes more than two dozen educational institutions, youth-serving organizations, employers, and funders.

Support for the LCAN's collaborative activities comes from Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, and Community Foundation of Sarasota County, with matching funds from the Florida Philanthropic Network through its College Access & Success Initiative (CASI), which is supported by the Helios Education Foundation and The Kresge Foundation.

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**About the Education Foundation of Sarasota County**

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County is an independent partner working to advance philanthropic support for Sarasota County Schools. Its mission is to enhance the potential of students, promote excellence in teaching and inspire innovation in education. Guided by the belief that education changes lives, the Education Foundation strives to match each donor's passion with high-impact projects created to ensure students graduate with purpose and are prepared for a postsecondary pathway. The Education Foundation of Sarasota County and its philanthropic investors are champions for students, teachers and schools. For more information on how to be a champion for education, visit [EdFoundationSRQ.org](http://EdFoundationSRQ.org).

**About Gulf Coast Community Foundation**

Together with our donors, Gulf Coast Community Foundation transforms 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 more than 700 families who have established charitable funds here, and we have invested over \$300 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](http://GulfCoastCF.org).