

Please Welcome Our New Green Business Partner: The Gulf Coast Community Foundation (Venice Headquarters & Sarasota Philanthropy Center)

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by Randy Penn

We're proud to announce our latest Green Business partner: Gulf Coast Community Foundation – Venice Headquarters and Gulf Coast Community Foundation – Sarasota Philanthropy Center.

About Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Headquartered in Venice, with a second office in downtown Sarasota, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has transformed the region through bold and proactive philanthropy for over 25 years. Serving the needs of the region as a partner in philanthropy and leader in community initiatives, Gulf Coast has

surpassed granting \$500 million in the areas of: health and human services, civic and economic development, education, arts and culture, and the environment. Gulf Coast was named one of the “Best Nonprofits to Work For” nationally by *The Nonprofit Times* in 2010, 2011, 2017, 2020, and 2021. To learn more, visit GulfCoastCF.org and follow them on Facebook at @GulfCoastCommFnd.



**GULF COAST
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Gulf Coast creates and funds data-driven initiatives and projects to address the region's most pressing challenges. The foundation's fundamental support of environmental initiatives include the Water Quality Playbook, Partners for Green Places, Solar United Neighbors, Legacy Trail Extension, and Venice Urban Forest. These projects help improve water quality, increase energy-efficiency, support affordable solar energy to homeowners, and support the enhancement of the environment in Sarasota County. The projects improve the lives of community members and ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Green Initiatives

Becoming a Green Business Partner aligns with Gulf Coast Community Foundation's fundamental principles of sustainability, integrated into the foundation. This made certification as a Green Business Partner easy, as the foundation fulfilled many requirements beforehand. These practices include landscaping with Florida-friendly plants, energy-efficient LED lighting, window tinting to reduce air leaks, and installation of faucet aerators. The most impressive component of their location is an artistic wood wall that features wood salvaged from Sarasota's historic John Ringling Towers. Foundation leaders and members

are also always looking for eco-friendly products that can be used within the workplace. This includes the use of eco-friendly cleaning products, compostable utensils instead of plastic, and reducing the number of single-use products that contribute to the landfill. In addition, they have incorporated energy-efficient lighting in their new downtown Sarasota Philanthropy Center.

Like their Venice Headquarters, the Philanthropy Center incorporates Ringling history with the use of reclaimed wood from the Ringling stables. Structural adjustments were also made to the existing building to incorporate more natural light within the facility.

In many ways, Gulf Coast Community Foundation is making a positive difference in the community and its environment.

About the Green Business Partnership

The Green Business Partnership is open to all businesses in Sarasota County. Certified Green Business partners operate in an environmentally responsible manner. More than 250 businesses have earned certification. Program certification includes an on-site verification of reduction, reuse and conservation practices in:

- Business operations;
- Solid waste management;
- Recycling; and
- Energy and water consumption.

UF/IFAS Online Green Business Course

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County's Waste Reduction program has added a new course to UF/IFAS Extension Online Learning: Green Business Partnership Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The "Green Business Partnership Best Management Practices (BMPs)" course is open for all businesses in Florida. Using the model of the Sarasota County Green Business Partnership, created in 2006, the course assists businesses with implementing green practices. A Sarasota County business that completes the application process will become a recognized Green Business Partner. To date, more than 250 businesses have earned certification in Sarasota County.



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