The Patterson Foundation continues to explore ways for everyone to experience and enjoy Patriot Plaza, the 2800-seat amphitheater at Sarasota National Cemetery which features commissioned art that honors veterans, inspires patriotism and embraces freedom. Visitors are welcome to experience Patriot Plaza in person and follow the National Cemetery Administration’s COVID-19 guidelines: groups are limited to 10, wear a mask and social distance from other visitors. The Patterson Foundation is excited to share that a virtual tour of Patriot Plaza will be available to the public in the spring of 2021, allowing visitors locally, nationally and internationally the ability to experience Patriot Plaza.

EXPERIENCE PATRIOT PLAZA
WITH ACTIVITY BOOKS

November 2020

The first edition of the Family Engagement Activity Book focuses on what is a Veteran, what is Veterans Day all about, and information about each of the Armed Forces of the United States. Fun activities include coloring the seals and a word search with words that are found throughout Patriot Plaza artwork and walkways. Click HERE to download or view a copy.

February 2021

The second edition of the Family Engagement Activity Book focuses on the history of national cemeteries, symbols at Patriot Plaza and traditions such as how to fold a US Flag. Fun activities include a word jumble, coloring Abraham Lincoln and matching military ribbons to the mural artwork found at Patriot Plaza. Click HERE to download or view a copy.

THE PATRIOT PLAZA VIRTUAL TOUR
BEHIND THE SCENES
The Patterson Foundation is working with The Collaboratory at Ringling College of Art and Design to create a virtual tour of Patriot Plaza for Florida middle school civics classes and the public with an anticipated release of spring 2021. The initial focus for this virtual tour is 8th grade civics classes whose normal curriculum would include an in person visit to Patriot Plaza through the EdExploreSRQ experiential learning platform used by the Sarasota County Schools for in classroom experiences and field trips. With all field trips cancelled for the foreseeable future, this virtual tour will allow students and the public the ability to tour Patriot Plaza and experience the art and architecture that honors our veterans and their families.

In person field trips are not anticipated until the 2021-2022 school year and The Patterson Foundation remains committed to funding the transportation to Patriot Plaza for any school in Charlotte, Desoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties.
The Wreaths Across America program is an excellent example of community involvement as organizations and individuals secure donations for remembrance wreaths to be placed on gravesites at Sarasota National Cemetery. This event involves scouts, students, parents, and neighbors in wreath placement, demonstrating patriotism and honor to all the veterans and family members interred at Sarasota National Cemetery.

In 2020 over 16,000 gravesites received a remembrance wreath. SNC, one of many national cemeteries participating in the 2020 WAA program, was approved to participate because the Regional Coordinator, Meshia Richardson, worked with the Interim Director on a detailed plan ensuring SNC would follow all COVID-19 safety protocols. The event took place during three days rather than a large gathering on one day. The community entered the cemetery, received the wreaths by a drive through transfer, then
placed the wreath, honored the veteran, and then departed, thereby keeping the actual number of visitors on the grounds at any one time to a safe minimum.

Over 3,000 community members placed wreaths in 2020, including the Chairman of The Patterson Foundation’s Governing Board, Ric Gregoria, with his daughter, Ashleigh, and grandson, Charlie. They represented many intergenerational families that participated. This event was a success due to the 165 volunteers who assisted the regional coordinator in ensuring a smooth and safe process.

Each year the number of gravesites increases, and the community strives to ensure that each family desiring a wreath at SNC will receive one. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a challenging year for many nonprofit organizations, including Wreaths Across America Sarasota. With one day left before the wreath sponsorship deadline, The Patterson Foundation discovered that SNC’s program was several thousand wreaths short of meeting their goal. The Patterson Foundation moved quickly to make a one-time donation of $50,000 to Wreaths Across America Sarasota. This donation catalyzed other last minute donations including a $50,000 match and additional funds that ensured not only adequate wreaths for 2020, but also provided a strong start for the 2021 Wreaths Across America Sarasota program.

During a surprise virtual event, The Patterson Foundation awarded a one-time honorarium of more than $450,000 to dozens of nonprofit agencies in attendance for all their hard work in the Season of Sharing campaign. The gift is part of Honoring & Onward, a celebration of The Patterson Foundation’s decade of impact through people, organizations, and communities while continuing to connect, learn, share, evolve and strengthen its efforts to realize shared aspirations.
"The Patterson Foundation is proud to celebrate ten years of helping our neighbors in need through the Season of Sharing campaign," said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. "Without the many partners and agencies donating their time and resources, Season of Sharing would not be able to strengthen the thousands of people it serves in our community. Their efforts are more important than ever during the pandemic, as many in our region find themselves facing significant financial hardship for the first time in their lives."

Season of Sharing was created over two decades ago through a unique partnership between the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Herald-Tribune Media Group. Season of Sharing is a trusted way for neighbors to help neighbors following an unexpected crisis. Since 2010, The Patterson Foundation has given $5.9 million to Season of Sharing.

To donate or learn more about Season of Sharing, please visit CFSarasota.org. Join the conversation on social media using #SeasonOfSharing.

IMPACT INVESTING

To help more local families and individuals achieve the dream of homeownership, The Patterson Foundation, in collaboration with Northern Trust, is buying $1 million in Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity mortgages to provide liquidity to boost affordable homes for people in our region. This one-time purchase will give Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity the capacity to build 70 homes over the next two years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant financial trauma for many in our region, impeding their ability to provide their family with a safe, dignified place to live. This has dramatically increased demand for Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity’s ongoing work to construct, rehabilitate, and preserve homes for families and individuals in need.

"Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity has a proven track record of building safe, comfortable places for people in our region to call home," said Debra Jacobs, President and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. "This one-time purchase leverages our current market conditions to provide the liquidity necessary for Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity to secure land and construct more much-needed affordable housing."

The Patterson Foundation and Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity have previously collaborated on several successful initiatives in our region, including the Legacy of Valor campaign, which honored our region's veterans and military families, and Margin & Mission Ignition, which helps nonprofits explore new ways to build thriving organizations with diverse revenue sources.
"Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity is extremely grateful to The Patterson Foundation and Northern Trust for investing in the Habitat mission during these challenging and unprecedented times," said Mike Mansfield, CEO of the Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity. "The affordable housing crisis continues to grow in our community, and this partnership allows us to meet the needs of more families by providing them with safe, decent, affordable homes. What a blessing!"

Northern Trust has engaged with Habitat for Humanity in communities nationwide over many years through its commitment to sustainable, affordable homeownership. Northern Trust and The Patterson Foundation will make no profit on this purchase.

"Northern Trust is pleased to collaborate with The Patterson Foundation and support Habitat for Humanity in their mission to support the Charlotte County community during these challenging times," said John Fumagalli, Florida President at Northern Trust Wealth Management.

Visit charlottecountyhfh.org to learn more about Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity.

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