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Pilot relief program helps feed 300 local hungry families

Two local nonprofits create permanent hurricane relief program in Sarasota, North Port

Staff Report

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Families enrolled at a Children First location in North Port are benefiting from an All Faiths Food Bank-supplied food pantry, which takes place twice a month.

PHOTO PROVIDED

SARASOTA — A hurricane relief pilot program recently launched by All Faiths Food Bank and Children First will finally get some permanent roots in Sarasota County.

The program was established in October as a pilot program after hurricanes Helene and Milton devastated the region with storm surge and ripping winds.

AFFB offers bimonthly food trips to its grocery-style pantries for families of students enrolled at Children First and its employees at three locations in North Port and Sarasota.

Now as a permanent program, AFFB will offer consistent access to food for 300 local families experiencing or facing hunger.



“Access to fresh, nutritious food is essential for our community’s most vulnerable children to grow, learn and thrive, and for their families to build a foundation for a healthier future,” Children First CEO Philip Tavill said.

Children First is ranked in the top 1% of all Head Start programs nationwide — services for families who live at or below the federal poverty level or based on other criteria, including a child with a diagnosed disability.

Children First’s mission to help families in need aligned with AFFB’s own mission, an agreement leaders of both organizations said will grow into a partnership over the coming years.

“Growing children need and deserve access to good nutrition,” AFFB CEO Nelle Miller said. “In early childhood, healthy foods are especially critical to support children’s rapid growth and development through infancy and the toddler years.”



More information about All Faiths Food Bank can be found at allfaithsfoodbank.org or by calling 941-379-6333.

