

Philanthropic Leaders Come Together at SB2 Luncheon

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SRQ Magazine's 2023 Philanthropic Agenda and Good Hero Awards luncheon and panel discussion took place yesterday at Michael's on East. The event explores the dynamic and ever changing world of nonprofits and honors individuals who have meaningfully impacted our community for good in the past year and for-profit companies who have been incredible philanthropic partners to the community.

Wes Roberts, Executive Publisher of *SRQ Magazine*, host and co-moderator, gave a warm welcome to all and thanked series sponsor Mariash Lowther Wealth Management, host sponsor, Michael's on East, good hero sponsor, JFCS of the Suncoast, and floral sponsor, Tropical interiors Florist. Roberts then addressed the community response to Hurricane Ian and recognized the attendees for their dedication. "Our local good guys leaped into action and helped those who needed it most," he said. "The only thing we can always expect is that there will always be unexpected tragedies, difficulties and challenges in our lives."

Brian Mariash, a former recipient of the Good Hero Award himself, then gave opening remarks before turning the stage over to keynote speaker, Mark Brewer, CEO/President, Central Florida Foundation. Brewer congratulated everyone for working

through and continuing to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. He spoke about how giving has changed over the years and shared a global message: "Philanthropy has the ability to bring people together to talk about things they might not have talked about before."

The five featured panelists--Susie Bowie, CEO/President, The William G and Marie Selby Foundation, Beth Duda, Director, Suncoast Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Dr. Kameron Hodgins, Director of Community Leadership, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Kelly Romanoff, Senior VP for Strategy and Evaluation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, Kirsten Russell, VP, Community Impact, Community Foundation of Sarasota County--then joined together for engaging discussions including what we have learned from the experience of having a hurricane strike so close to our region and how to choose priorities for support when there are so many groups in our community that need help.

New CEO and President of JFCS of the Suncoast Dr. Helene Lothman took the stage to kick off *SRQ Magazine's* Good Hero Philanthropic Awards which went to the following recipients: Jessica Braemer of Better Together, Bronwyn Beightol of United Way Suncoast, Lisa Moore of Blaze of Hope, Bill Sadlo of Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties, Liberty Savings Bank, W.E. "Chip" Gaylor of Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Norman Love of Norman Love Confections, Elizabeth "Betty" Ferguson of Sarasota Ballet, Mary Kay Henson of Unidos Now and other community projects and Marjan Zahu of Florida Cancer Specialists (FCS) Foundation. Congratulations to all ten of this year's honorees. Read more about each Good Hero in upcoming editions of *SRQ Magazine*.