

COMMUNITY BRIEF

CASL receives Gulf Coast grant for inmate transition program

VENICE – The Gulf Coast Community Foundation has awarded a \$57,994 grant from its Criminal Justice Reform Initiative to Community Assisted and Supported Living for its “Transition Inmates to Supported Housing Project.”

The Transitions program provides formerly incarcerated individuals who have a mental health condition with supportive housing while they continue to overcome barriers upon release. Gulf Coast has awarded a total of \$214,000

to the Transitions program since its inception and the results have exceeded the goals. The average recidivism rate for formerly incarcerated individuals is 65%. The rate of those within the Transitions program is 20%.

Referrals for the Transitions program are made by the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office Re-entry Navigators.

“This partnership ... demonstrates that when people are given a hand up, they can succeed,” said Jennifer Johnston, director of community leadership for Gulf Coast. “This is a program that strengths our community, not just for

the families involved but for all.”

Individuals released from a correctional facility have numerous challenges with few resources, leading to a repetitive cycle of correctional facility stays as well as costly hospital admission and shelter stays. Of 19 participants in the Transitions program, 10 have moved into permanent housing. Twelve of the 19 experienced homelessness over their lifetime and all were unstably housed or homeless prior to their most recent incarceration.

For information, visit caslinc.org.

Submitted by Rachel Denton