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Community Foundation of Sarasota County Puts a College Education Within Reach of Booker High School Students

The \$50,000 grant will fund tuition cost for
economically disadvantaged students.

(Sarasota, FL; October 16, 2020) Economically disadvantaged Booker High School students now have increased opportunities to obtain a college degree thanks to a recently awarded grant to the Booker Promise Foundation from the Allen Wirtz Nobbe and Jo Bowen Nobbe Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

The Community Foundation's \$50,000 grant will be matched in full by the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Foundation and provide scholarships for fourteen Booker High School students covering tuition and registration fees at a Florida public college.

"The capacity of a quality education to transform lives has long been established and every student deserves the chance to forge their own route to a bright future – no matter where they are from or what resources are available to them. Where a child starts should not dictate where they finish," says Booker High School principal Dr. Rachel Shelley.

Michael J. Shelton, Chair of the Booker Promise Board of Trustees, offered a similar sentiment. *"The capacity of a quality education to transform the lives of first generation, economically disadvantaged students has long been established. Booker*

High School students do not lack ability. They lack opportunity. They need mentors to guide them. They need to build skills, such as perseverance and teamwork, that aren't found in textbooks. And they need to shape a clear vision of what they can do with their lives and how they can get there. The Community Foundation grant will help fulfil these needs."

With 69% of Booker High School students classified as "economically disadvantaged," the need for tuition assistance is undeniable. The average Florida student's loan debt averages \$34,544 with a monthly payment of \$393 taking close to 30 years to repay.

Dr. Shelley is also thinking of the future this grant will provide her students. *"The Community Foundation grant will help bridge the opportunity gap by removing the tuition barrier that prevents high school graduates from pursuing a college education thereby boosting the population of workforce-ready young adults. The Community Foundation's support will also be the beginning of the end of generational poverty for an entire population of Sarasota's youth while creating a broad public understanding that college and technical training is an investment in the community's future and a necessary continuation of K-12 education in the 21st century."*

Booker Promise is committed to providing even more scholarships to Booker High School students during the coming year.

About Community Foundation of Sarasota County

About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County: The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is a public charity founded in 1979 by the Southwest Florida Estate Planning Council as a resource for caring individuals and the causes they support, enabling them to make a charitable impact on the community. With assets of over \$417 million in more than 1,500 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling more than \$274 million over our 40-year history in the areas of

education, the arts, health and human services, civic engagement, animal welfare and the environment. For more information, visit www.CFSarasota.org or call (941) 955-3000.

About Booker Promise Foundation

The Booker Promise Foundation is a tax-exempt non-profit organized for the sole purpose of assisting Booker High School prepare its students for the 21st century workforce without the burden of unmanageable college debt. Booker Promise is a comprehensive college and career-readiness program designed to ensure that every Booker High School student has the skills and resources necessary to develop to their fullest potential. Additionally, the Program provides scholarships covering tuition and registration fees at a Florida public college or technical school for eligible economically disadvantaged students. For more information, please visit www.BookerPromise.org or call 941-928-0567