

OPINION

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Herald-Tribune

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Your Turn
Roxie Jerde and Debra Jacobs
Guest columnists

Community supports its nonprofits via 2024 Giving Challenge

On April 9 and 10, this community came together in a show of unity that demonstrates just how connected we are.

The 2024 Giving Challenge, presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and strengthened by The Patterson Foundation, showcased the power of collective action in our region, raising an impressive \$17.2 million for 724 nonprofit organizations in a span of just 24 hours.

To incentivize giving among all income levels, The Patterson Foundation's Governing Board again approved the unique unlimited dollar-for-dollar match on all donations from \$25 to \$100, which not only inspired more people to give, but also contributed \$6.7 million to this year's grand total.

Over nine Giving Challenges since 2012, the community has rallied time and again, raising \$92 million in unrestricted funds for local nonprofit organizations serving Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties that are largely responsible for the amazing quality of life we enjoy.

Not every community is as fortunate to have such a robust nonprofit sector. Nonprofits work to enhance the well-being of our entire community in ways that include protecting our beautiful environment, presenting high-quality arts performances and exhibits, and providing care for those people (and animals!) in our region who most need it.

The values we hold most dear – conservation of our natural world, preservation of our rich history and culture, the creation of opportunities that invite all of us to reach our full potential – are safeguarded through the innovation and hard work of nonprofit organizations, many of which operate on minimal budgets and rely on volunteers to fulfill their missions. The lift the Giving Challenge provides creates an enduring source of strength for many of these vital organizations. Most importantly, these dollars benefit the people who live here.

The Giving Challenge invites our friends and neighbors to support important causes, affirming the very best of our generosity and connecting us to one another and this community we all call home. It's an opportunity to come together for a purpose bigger than any one of us; this year, 53,305 donors participated, producing a groundswell of support that will fuel the great work of our nonprofits and create new possibilities and lasting impact.

We thank all who took part in the Giving Challenge and hope that it becomes imprinted on our collective spirit as a gesture that shows we are a community that unites to support and preserve this place we call home. It reminds us of the many accomplishments we can achieve when we come together.

Roxie Jerde is the CEO of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. Debra Jacobs is the CEO of The Patterson Foundation.

SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters must have the writer's name, full address and daytime phone number and should be no longer than 200 words. We may condense letters and edit them for accuracy. Writers can have one published letter every 30 days. We are unable to acknowledge or return letters, or to publish every letter we receive. We no longer accept letters by postal mail. Email letters to: editor.letters@heraldtribune.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are poised to repeat their 2020 battle for the presidency. BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI, JIM WATSON, MORRY GASH, POOL PHOTO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Therapist approves of school chaplains

As a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, I must counter the letter of April 24, "Don't send children to school chaplains," which criticized the governor's bill allowing chaplains in the schools.

All schools have some form of social worker and/or counselor on duty. Teachers are aware of the ability to refer students for mental health counseling or to advise such to parents.

In my years of experience in the schools, I have found that there is a marked lack of spiritual/moral guidance offered. There are many programs to identify mental health issues and to find resources for them. But, in fact, it has become taboo to mention God or a higher power as an integral concept in human experience.

As chaplains in the armed services and hospitals can attest, a focus on our spiritual connection to each other and a higher power can offer comfort and support in a different way than traditional counseling. This service is voluntary and can address an aspect of existence sorely lacking in our culture.

Laurel Maul, retired psychotherapist, Sarasota

Take control of government by voting

Abe Lincoln once famously said, "... government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

How do you make it a government of the people? By voting!

Shame on all those who can but don't vote. If you want change, do not neglect those who are not doing what you want them to do.

If you don't like all the local development or the denial of funding for the 211 system, vote out the members of the commissions and councils.

If you don't like the abortion/women's health rules being put forth and passed in Tallahassee, vote them out!

If you don't like the way the state Senate and House are defining "small government" as "the way I see it, not the way you see it," vote them out!

If you don't like the way that the House of Representatives is behaving, ignoring the needs of the people and not representing your needs, vote them out!

We don't need term limits; we have the vote. Use it, or after November you may lose it!

John Oelfke, Sarasota

Trump, Biden: Between rock and hard place

To paraphrase Don Corleone in "The Godfather": "How did things get so bad?" Only former President Donald Trump could make current President Joe Biden look good – and only Biden could do that for Trump.

Trump is up to his neck in criminal indictments and the president continues to stumble, fumble and

mumble – and utter inane threats that the targets of these utterances ignore!

Trump seems unable to tell the truth if it doesn't help his ego or career and Biden "has been wrong on nearly every foreign policy and national security issue for over four decades," according to Robert Gates, defense secretary under former President Barack Obama.

Thomas G. Moore, Bradenton

Leaving abortion up to states divisive

USA TODAY columnist Ingrid Jacques continues to be annoying and shortsighted as well as askew ("Trump makes right call on national abortion ban; states should decide," April 10).

She wrote that former President Donald Trump's "messaging on abortion is about as mercurial as one would expect coming from the former reality TV star. On that, we agree!"

However, since Trump's mental acuity is very questionable – he suggested we inject bleach or disinfectant or use UV light to treat COVID-19 – it has occurred to me that Vladimir Putin or Steve Bannon may be coaching him on abortion policy.

Leaving it up to each state is yet another method of fracturing the United States.

Edy Browne, Venice

Pass Alzheimer's bills to improve care

Florida has the second highest number of residents living with Alzheimer's in the U.S. We must ensure we are ready for the increasing impact of this disease in Sarasota County.

I have seen many of my friends struggle to get a diagnosis. It was frustrating and exhausting on top of a very scary time. They were either misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all and told to come back in six months. They lost valuable time with their families, and no one should have to go through what they did to get a proper diagnosis.

There are two bills in Congress that must be passed to support families in Sarasota and address these issues.

The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Reauthorization Act would empower public health departments to implement dementia interventions such as increasing early detection and diagnosis, reducing risk and supporting caregivers.

The Accelerating Access to Dementia and Alzheimer's Provider Training Act would provide education and training to more primary care providers.

These two bills go hand in hand. You can't ask families to seek early detection without educating physicians to give an accurate and swift diagnosis.

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, of Longboat Key, must join the Alzheimer's Association in supporting both of these bills.

Denise Gibson, Bradenton



Anti-abortion activists, right, protest near the "Rally for Our Freedom" to protect abortion rights for Floridians in Orlando on April 13. Florida Rising, Floridians Protecting Freedom and coalition partners officially launched the "Yes on 4" campaign. Florida's Supreme Court on April 1 paved the way for a ban on abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, even as it allowed Amendment 4, protecting abortion rights, to be on the ballot in the November election.

CHANDAN KHANNA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES