2021
TPF IMPACT: Reflections and Looking Forward

By Connor LaGrange Fellow, 2021-2022
In March of 2020, when the world came screeching to a halt, momentum and innovation were most likely of lower importance than reacting and staying afloat. We now find ourselves two and a half years removed from the greatest black swan event in centuries, and the world is beginning to slowly wake up. Many of us began exploring and learning new things during our two-year period of flux. Some took up baking, others guitar, and if you are anything like me, you may have dabbled in gardening. Gardening offered a chance for outdoor exploration, creativity, deep learning, and a chance to see hard work come to fruition.

Gardening, as it turns out, is a great way to add some fresh color to one’s life. It is also an nature-focused metaphor for the work of The Patterson Foundation (TPF). From fertilizing to watering to growing to pruning to reaping, many aspects of the gardening world offer a chance to look in-depth at TPF’s approach of strengthening people, organizations, and communities in ways that foster wide participation.

**Pruning**

As any gardener knows, sometimes, for the health of the entire garden, it is wise to prune back certain areas. For other plants to thrive, a gardener must know when it is time to trim. TPF has sunsettled the Aspirations Journalism initiative as its key partner, Herald-Tribune, shifted the alignment. The blossoming relationship with SolMart Media provides channels to connect with Spanish-speaking people throughout the region.

As Sarasota County Schools manages EdExploreSRQ, TPF will shift its support to how the 24-hour platform can expand efforts focused on PreK through 3rd grade to align with the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. TPF intends to end its EdExploreSRQ support by the end of the 2023 school year.

The engagement with Suncoast Nursing Action Coalition (SNAC) is winding down as other nursing endeavors percolate throughout the region.

Age-Friendly Sarasota has transitioned to Sarasota County. With the emergence of the Village movement and UPLIFT Florida Network, this support system for older adults is gathering momentum. TPF’s role as a facilitator will continue into early 2023.
Cultivation

Growth does not happen randomly. It takes deep intentionality and cultivation. Often, before the beauty can be seen, one must till the soil to ready it for what’s to come. The same is true for TPF’s initiatives. Many initiatives continue to be cultivated, knowing a rich partnership is in the works.

Both NetHope and Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP) are in phases of cultivation. These two organizations are leaders in their respective fields, but both have gone through tremendous turnover in recent years. TPF continues to cultivate the relationship with new CEOs and team members. NetHope and CDP enable TPF to be responsive in its efforts to provide disaster relief. TPF can ensure the investment is in the right hands by leveraging experts.

New Growth

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading presented Suncoast Remake Learning Days (SRLD), a 10-day festival of free hands-on learning experiences in TPF’s four-county region. This multi-venue open house celebrated the joy of adults and children learning side by side. SRLD consisted of more than 140 events hosted by more than 165 organizations. Over 10,000 people attended, and more than 150 individuals registered for the appreciation breakfast.

Fueling Dynamic Fundraising (FDF) continues to find its place in the TPF garden. Now two cohorts in, FDF continues to optimize the relationship TPF has with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and The Fund Raising School. To date, six nonprofits have participated in the six-week course, and four are in the process of creating their development plans with TPF guidance.

TPF continues to find ways to creatively strengthen people, organizations, and communities. One of the newfound ways TPF contributes to the Suncoast’s overall climate is through Higher Waters: Suncoast Quality of Life. TPF aspires to share its knowledge in various ways, including the creation of science-based, accessible data pertaining to the rising water levels in the Suncoast Region.

Digital Access for All (DA4A) continues to be a national convener in the digital equity space. DA4A is continuing to expand its influence by partnering with the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and hosting “big tent” events to find and plant new seeds. With the expansion of the Digital Navigator partnerships and working with local municipalities on their broadband plans, DA4A has become a spreader of promising practices.
Watering and Soaking in the Sun

Every good gardener knows that watering and sunlight are two of the most vital aspects in growing hearty and robust plants. Plants living in the sun and drinking the water will thrive year after year. Minor maintenance is needed, and a plant will continue growing, morphing, and blooming.

When TPF takes on an initiative, it strives to create connections that strengthen the changemakers invested in the journey. That approach is woven throughout TPF’s Advancing Philanthropic Leadership (APL) initiative, presented in collaboration with the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. APL has grown from the Fellows program (now having amassed seven fellows) to include several courses taught at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy — Beyond the Check and Study Away course. After pivoting to a virtual experience in 2020, 2022’s Study Away, The Future of the Philanthropic Sector, saw TPF hosting ten graduate and undergraduate students along with two faculty members for an intensive week of work and consulting on the Suncoast.

TPF’s approach strives to continually break down silos and create systems by finding shared aspirations. Aspirations to Action (A2A) offers the opportunity for community members to find their shared aspirations together by not arriving with the answer. Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglass: A Walk to Respect, a one-act play written by TPF’s Beth Duda, with original spoken word poetry from Cedric Hameed, offers community members the opportunity to see historical figures bridge divides between differing views. TPF continues its partnership with The Harwood Institute to ensure each TPFer can turn outward. Cheri Coryea has joined the A2A team and has already taken the initiative to new heights. Momentum is building with community conversations in DeSoto County with the theme of Solutions to Action.

The Bay Park Conservancy continues to transform The Bay in downtown Sarasota. TPF’s unique matching opportunity remains in place. For every $5 million private philanthropy raises, TPF will match $1 million, generating an additional $24 million.

Perennials

Year after year, perennial flowers and plants are the centerpiece of a growing garden. With previous budding, pruning, and watering, perennials demonstrate the critical care a gardener has put in as their beauty and sustainability shine.

One of Sarasota’s most prominent architectural features also happens to be one of TPF’s legacy initiatives. Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery continues to offer a space for veterans and their loved ones to find respite and remembrance. Through the innovative virtual tour created by The Collaboratory at Ringling College and a partnership with the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota, children and families for years to come can enjoy this monument to freedom.
The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) continues to strengthen children, families, caregivers, and schools in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. **THIS BOOK IS COOL!** and **Suncoast Summer Reading Challenge** continues to be a bright spot for the region by supporting families with their reading efforts. **THIS BOOK IS COOL! In School** began setting roots in 2020 as a response to COVID-19. SCGLR created the program to come alongside educators, provide resources, and add books to students’ home libraries. SCGLR’s steadfast efforts have been recognized nationally. It was named a 2022 All-America Award winner and a Campaign for Grade-Level Reading 2021-2022 Pacesetter Award winner. SCGLR serves as the anchor Magnolia tree in TPF’s garden. Standing tall and strong, blossoming beauty each year, holding steadfast as a reminder of the great work TPF pursues.

If the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is TPF’s Magnolia, then the **Nonprofit Thrivability** initiative is the Japanese Maple anchoring the other side. Nonprofit Thrivability continues to offer nonprofits a chance to expand their capacity through earned-income projects. Both **Margin & Mission Ignition** and **Advancing Mission Thrivability** were offered in 2021-2022, with nonprofits ranging from schools to retreat centers to anti-sex trafficking groups and everything in between. Nonprofit Thrivability is yet another way TPF strengthens impact by helping organizations thrive.

### Reaping the Harvest

A gardener’s pride and joy: whether vegetables and fruits ripening or flowers coming into full bloom, seeing hard work pay off can be good for the soul.

2021-2022 was full of bountiful harvests regarding TPF initiatives. Two years after the most successful **Giving Challenge** to date, the people of the Suncoast and beyond continued their generous streak by contributing a total of $16,017,021 — including TPF’s dollar-for-dollar match on any unique donation of $25-$100, an impressive $6,149,105.

**Season of Sharing (SOS)** continued soaring to new heights and providing a flexible safety net of last-resort funding for individuals and families living on the Suncoast. SOS distributed $4,454,834, including TPF’s highest-ever match of $700,000.
The Next 10 - Ten Years Ahead

Over the last ten years, TPF has left its fingerprints across the Suncoast. TPF continues to look forward to the next ten years as it discovers ways to evolve and continue to foster wide participation in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota, and beyond. Although the future is unknown, there are certainties within TPF’s approach that act as fertilizer for its garden, the most important being TPFers. As the foundation continues to add new, highly-qualified talent to the team, initiatives can rest assured knowing new and innovative seeds are getting planted.

Another fertilizer is TPF’s commitment to its values which undergird every decision. A striving to keep recognizing the phases of the Cope, Adapt, Innovate model and the ability to engage The Five C’s — Caring, Connecting, Collaborating, Contributing, and Creating in the work. TPF will continue Moving The Needle and helping to move people, organizations, and communities From where we are To a place of share aspirations. TPF has been honored to work with the community for the past ten-plus years. The soil is ripe, and the gardeners are ready to see an even more bountiful harvest in the next ten years.