

## **Florida Blue Foundation Celebrates Substantial Community Investment in Panhandle**

The Florida Blue Foundation and numerous area non-profits celebrated the investment over the last year of more than \$600,000 in support across the Pensacola region.

A series of grants focused on the Panhandle is helping address critical issues such as health equity, chronic health conditions, food security, education, economic stability, mental well-being and more.

Addressing 50 area non-profit leadership and board members at a November 7 event at Manna Food Bank, Florida Blue Market President Darnell Smith noted collaboration was the key for success among organizations gathered in the room.

“In recent years, as an organization, Florida Blue has taken on a deeper, hyper-local approach to supporting healthy communities by understanding and supporting initiatives that meet the unique and diverse needs of each community we serve,” said Smith. “This same commitment holds true here in Pensacola.”

One activity highlighted during the event was the “Fill the Mayflower” activity led by the Manna Food Bank. Fill the Mayflower supports families in need during the holiday season. “We understand the power of collaborations and partnerships which allow us to combine our resources with 24 other partners in our community to provide the healthiest food possible to children and families in need,” said Manna Executive Director DeDe Flounlaker. “Florida Blue’s longstanding support of our mission helps us provide thousands of healthy meals through our main pantry service as well as our 17 specialty programs in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.”

**Other non-profit grantees highlighted at the event included:**

### **Health, Wellness and Mental Well-Being Focus**

- Pace Center for Girls
- Covenant Care Foundation
- Boys & Girls Club Emerald Coast
- United Way of Northwest Florida

## **Education Focus**

- University of West Florida, Usha Kundu, MD College of Health
- Pensacola State College
- Children's Home Society
- Escambia County Public School Foundation

## **Food Security Focus**

- Manna Food Bank
- Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation
- United Way of Emerald Coast

## **About the Florida Blue Foundation**

Florida Blue Foundation enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions and embracing solutions that create a meaningful impact in our communities. More than 8 million Floridians have received services as a result of our community investments since our founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is committed to improve health equity by impacting food security, advancing mental well-being, growing healthy communities, and addressing health disparities. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information, please visit [www.FloridaBlueFoundation.com](http://www.FloridaBlueFoundation.com).

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**Attached photo caption: Pensacola nonprofit leaders and Florida Blue executives gather to celebrate \$600,000 in grants funds at Manna Food Bank on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. (Photo credit: Kate Treick)**