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Opinion

Point of View: Palm Beach County nonprofits need us now more than ever

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The services of these nonprofits save taxpayers millions by helping men, women and children get back on their feet and financially independent, preventing children from needing foster care, juvenile justice and mental health services.

No doubt that when this coronavirus crisis ebbs, many unsung heroes will emerge. At the top of the list, of course, will be the medical community and first-responders. Another of the wizards behind the curtain that contributes so much to our communities all year, every year is our nonprofits.

Already asked to do more with less and supported mainly through grants, donations and events, nonprofits are struggling through this COVID-19 crisis to continue to give a hand up to the most physically, emotionally and financially challenged in our community. Nonprofits are struggling like so many others through this crisis, but nonprofits know full well that their plates will be even fuller when we return to some semblance of normalcy. With layoffs, the number of homeless and hungry will increase; with the stresses of self-isolation, domestic violence and child abuse will increase; mental health and substance abuse will escalate. At the same time, unfortunately, nonprofits will face loss of income from canceled events and less funding from foundations whose balances are affected by the stock market. While private and government funders are to be applauded for coming to the rescue in providing emergency funds, it won't be enough in the long run.

Despite grappling day and night to find stopgap measures to keep their much-needed services running; staff healthy and working; and finances in the black, Palm Beach County's nonprofits are greatly concerned with each other's welfare.

They are conferencing with each other twice weekly, seeking ways to comfort and share information and ideas and, even staff. Those who might normally be vying for the same grants, are working together, a great example for our entire community.

The services of these nonprofits save taxpayers millions by helping men, women and children get back on their feet and financially independent, preventing children from needing foster care, juvenile justice and mental health services. Now they need us more than ever. If you're a current donor, keep giving; if you've never given before, find a local charity whose mission tugs at your heartstrings and give.

MARLENE PASSELL, WEST PALM BEACH

Editor's note: Passell is manager of the Nonprofit Chamber of Palm Beach County.