

# OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE

Release Contacts: Lucy Nicandri, Executive Director – Suncoast Charities  
(941) 706-3795 / [lucy.nicandri@suncoastcc.org](mailto:lucy.nicandri@suncoastcc.org)

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Britney Guertin, Communications & Content Manager – Visit Sarasota  
(941) 702-0115 / [bguertin@visitsarasota.org](mailto:bguertin@visitsarasota.org)

## SUNCOAST CHARITIES FOR CHILDREN ANNOUNCES DECISION TO TRANSITION ROLE IN THE SARASOTA POWERBOAT GRAND PRIX RACE

Suncoast Charities for Children has announced that it will transition from being the primary organizer of the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Race. This decision was recently approved by the Board, as part of a restructuring strategy, necessitated by the onset of COVID-19, to align with their fundraising mission of providing support to children, teens, and adults with special needs. This strategy includes focusing on holding special event fundraisers county-wide that offer a lower overhead to produce in order to increase the amount of money granted and decrease demand on staff/volunteer resources which are thinner due to the pandemic.

The Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Race has been an iconic event in this community for 35 years. Lucy Nicandri, Executive Director for Suncoast Charities for Children, has been involved helping to organize the race for more than 30 years. Nicandri stated: “We were honored to start and establish this race, which in 2019 generated an estimated economic impact of \$29.6 Million and 16,800 room nights, and appreciate all the support received from Sarasota County, Visit Sarasota County, and the City of Sarasota.” Today’s announcement means that the charity will not be involved with organizing the race related portion of the Festival. However, the charity will continue to organize all the traditional Festival events around the race. Suncoast Charities for Children will also support the transition, as the event organizer Powerboat P1 assumes a more traditional role in staging the race with the continued support of Visit Sarasota County’s Sports Commission.

Many of the Festival non-racing events, organized by Suncoast Charities, have proven to be successful revenue producing fundraisers. These events include a golf classic, kids fishing tournament, July 4<sup>th</sup> Bayfront Fireworks, “Blast On The Bay” Boat Fun Run, and a Festival Kickoff Party. These events, and possibly some other new events, will continue. Discussions are also underway to possibly rebrand this Summer tradition into a Summer Fest. “Visit Sarasota County is excited to see Suncoast Charities for Children maximize their fundraising opportunities by transitioning the Powerboat Grand Prix Race to Powerboat P1,” said Virginia Haley, Visit Sarasota County President. “We’ve had a great relationship with both organizations for many years and believe the Festival and boat race are set up for continued success.”

Powerboat P1 is the sanctioning organization for the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Race, and is the leading international powerboat racing promoter that has worked with Suncoast Charities for Children since 2015. It will continue its role as race promoter in partnership with Visit Sarasota. This will involve race management both on and off the water, production and distribution on a 60-minute international television show together with live streaming. Next year’s Powerboat Grand Prix at the end of June will be the second round of the six-venue American Power Boat Association offshore race series and further details will be released next month.

5317 Fruitville Road - Suite 43  
Sarasota, FL 34232  
Phone: (941) 487-7904  
Fax: (941) 706-3825

Various special events held throughout the year are the primary source of revenue for Suncoast Charities for Children. Net revenues raised from these events enables Suncoast Charities to provide an annual grant to the Suncoast Foundation impacting area non-profits such as Children First, Loveland Center, The Florida Center for Early Childhood, Sarasota County Special Olympics, Venice Challenger Baseball, The Haven and the Sertoma Speech Clinic of Venice. Over the years, net proceeds from the Grand Prix Festival have enabled the Suncoast Foundation to construct facilities valued at over \$20 Million for several of these agencies who occupy those buildings for only \$1.00 per year.

Other events organized by Suncoast Charities for Children include the Thunder By The Bay Music & Motorcycle Festival, High Tide Country Music Festival, and Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. The mission of Suncoast Charities for Children is “Serving local children, teens, and adults with special needs since 1985.” To learn more visit: **[suncoastcharitiesforchildren.org](http://suncoastcharitiesforchildren.org)**