

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([00:01](#)):

Hey, how y'all doing? Good to see you.

Chris Adamec ([00:04](#)):

Well, thank y'all for coming. On behalf of the Adamec family, I'd love to present to you Ms. Casey DeSantis.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([00:10](#)):

That is the best intro. That is so great. Thank you for being here. And I just wanna say personally, on behalf of the governor and myself, thank you for what you're doing. I know a lot of people in this room are volunteering and helping with the relief efforts, and so it doesn't go unnoticed. And I know there's a lot of people in southwest Florida in the affected areas who have been through a really tough time and they appreciate everything that you guys are doing to make a difference, and which is one of the reasons why we're here today. Happy to announce that with the Florida Disaster Fund, we've raised over \$45 million going to the relief efforts, which is a record in the state of Florida. But I'm here today to tell you that our work has only begun, that we are not gonna finish until everybody's back on their feet and everybody is recovering.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([00:52](#)):

And we know that that's gonna take a long time because honestly, being on the ground and talking to a lot of folks, I mean, they lived in areas where they didn't think that they needed flood insurance, and this was a 500 year flood and they're looking for pathways to be able to rebuild. And so with the \$45 million and growing that we're doing, we're gonna ensure that we're gonna help them every way we can to get back on their feet. One of the neat things about what we've been able to do is that when we first launched this fund, we reached out to American Express, MasterCard and Visa and we told them, Hey, listen, can you waive the processing fees because you know what, 3% or 2% off of a million dollar donation, that's somebody's home that we could rebuild. And they did. So a hundred percent of the funds that we raise go directly to the relief efforts, which is exciting.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([01:39](#)):

We've had 62,000 people from across Florida and the nation that have donated and we've had some really great businesses that have made some sizable donations that have been just wonderful. And one of those is Florida Blue, and they're gonna talk in a second. We also are excited, CSX has done a lot to really support us and dailies. And so we're gonna be coming back, obviously to Northeast Florida, and we're gonna be shaking the trees as much as possible to raise more funds, which I think again, is gonna be a really big deal. I wanna thank Adamec Harley Davidson for what they've done. A hundred percent of what they generate in t-shirt sales goes directly to the people on the ground. And so this is a really unique way that businesses can get involved. Cuz I talk to folks and they say, You know, we might not necessarily be able to write a sizable check, but can we do something where a percentage of a sale can go?

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([02:31](#)):

And and I say, Yes, a hundred percent, whatever you can think of, this is the time to do it. So I have a phone number for people if they want to get involved with their business and they wanna find a creative way to support the fund, they can do so. It's 850 414 7400, and we'll give that to the media, of course, so that they can get that out there and we can engage as many businesses across the state in the nation

actually as possible. If you wanna donate to the fund, [Floridadisasterfund.org](http://Floridadisasterfund.org) or you can also text disaster to 2 0 2 2 2 and a hundred percent again of your donation will go right to the victims of the hurricane. And with that, I wanna introduce our, first speaker is Darnell Smith. He's the North Florida President of Florida Blue. They did a million dollar donation right out of the gate when we launched the funds and so I could not thank their support enough. And so I want Darnell to come up and say a few words.

Darnell Smith ([03:29](#)):

First of all, like to start with a thank you for the First Lady. Whenever we typically have these hurricanes and they have a major impact to people's lives, often when the camera's shut off, nobody's watching and nobody's really taking care of the people who need help. And thanks to your leadership, that will not be the case here. So we thank you for that.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([03:51](#)):

Thank you.

Darnell Smith ([03:53](#)):

With that, ladies and gentlemen, we're honored to be able to give \$1 million to the Florida Disaster Fund after this past hurricane, Hurricane Ian. And we've done a number of other things as well in order to be able to support people throughout this particular issue. First, we like to share with you that we have telehealth services that are available free of charge for folks who absolutely have a need being able to just, you know, see a particular physician about just about anything. And so those services are available. We have free emotional support services as well through what we call our Teledoc services. And so we can make those numbers available throughout the course of this particular program here, but we'll make it available to the media.

Darnell Smith ([04:49](#)):

And then we've done a number of things of being able to make certain that as people are in need, having issues of, complex issues, not having access to their medications and things of that sort. We're reaching out to them. We're making certain that if they need anything, that we're absolutely there, being able to ensure that we're helping them to get through these very, very tough times. And so that's what Floridians do when folks are hurting, we stand up. And so we're proud to be able to do that with many of our corporate partners, but certainly in partnership with the First Lady and we're happy to be a part of this. Thank you so much.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([05:29](#)):

I appreciate. He brought up a really good point about the mental health services. So for the first time, under this governor in the Department of Emergency Management, we have a mental health coordinator that is working with public and private partnerships to not only get the mental health support for the victims of the hurricane, but also for our great first responders in our USAR teams. We had more USAR, which are search and rescue folks, deploy to the affected areas more than any time in our nation's history since 9/11. And so we're making sure that if they have needs as far as it pertains to their mental wellbeing, that that is being supported. And we appreciate what Florida Blue is doing to support those efforts as well. With that, Brian Tucker with CSX, the VP of Corporate Communications, they've been very generous in supporting the fund as well. Wanna give them an opportunity to talk.

Brian Tucker ([06:15](#)):

Thank you. Yeah, thank you. Well on behalf of the 20,000 CSX employees across the entire country, I can say that we are also pleased and honored to be able to contribute to the Florida Disaster Fund. At CSX we care deeply about the communities that welcome us every day, but none more than those here in our home state of Florida. So I would like to echo Darnell's sentiments in thanking First Lady DeSantis for your leadership and everything that you've done to raise awareness for this and the funds that have been raised. It's just tremendous. It's incredibly impressive. And CSX couldn't be prouder. And to be part of this coalition of businesses and everyday Floridians who have come together to support their neighbors, we have a lot of work to do. And as the first Lady said, continue giving and we'll get back on our feet. Thank you.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([07:27](#)):

Appreciate it. And with that, Secretary Tamayo Volunteer Florida. So the fund resides within her agency, and so working with her is what we're doing to make sure we're maximizing the dollars. So when FEMA dollars run short, the fund can come in and supplement that with good nonprofits who are on the ground in the rebuilding efforts. And so she's literally been on the phone the whole time, which I told her, I said, You can take a second from fundraising to say a few words, but as soon as the press conference is over, you need to get back out there and raise more money. So for five minutes, here's Josie.

Josie Tomayo ([07:55](#)):

Thank you First Lady. Thank you. And first of all, thank you very much. It's always a pleasure to be here, specifically in Jacksonville, sort of our second home. And I wanna thank all the wonderful sponsors from Harley Davidson to Florida Blue to CSX, and to Dailies obviously for contributing and being first up to contribute. It's my honor to be here. I'm the CEO of Volunteer Florida and I first of all wanna thank the governor and the first lady for their tireless work in opening up the fund. And since September 27th, the First Lady is correct, we have raised over \$45 million and we have also received 61,000 donors separately and have received money from over 80 corporate sponsors, which is amazing when you think about it. We are so blessed to be in Florida and so blessed that we have the ability to serve these individuals.

Josie Tomayo ([08:50](#)):

And this is a storm like no other. And so it is my great privilege to lead Volunteer Florida, and we have one of our commissioners here that sits on our commission. So I'm very happy she's here. But I also wanna talk about, and we work with nonprofits on the ground, with Catholic Charities, Red Cross, Team Rubicon, all these people are down there in the field. My staff is in the field addressing those issues. But more importantly, and the First Lady touched on it, there's gonna be a lot of recovery, broad recovery involved, right? And so we wanna continue our efforts in fundraising because that is where the long term effects of this storm are felt. And as I say, we are here and I get calls every single day about donations. I answer them, I send my emails, and as the first lady has said, we now have the line that can call in at 850 414 4700 and it's prompt number eight.

Josie Tomayo ([09:45](#)):

So believe you me, we have somebody manning that line the whole time. But I also wanna take an opportunity to thank those volunteers that are in the field. And we at, not only do we administer the Florida Disaster Fund, through our foundation, but we also assist through our volunteer, we're the

Florida's volunteer agency. So we have on our website Volunteer Connect, right? And so there are over 2,400 volunteer opportunities. And I can tell you that even as late as this weekend, we had an organization, the Boys and Girls Club, who were looking for volunteers and I was able to connect them and say, how many, what can we do, how we can help you? And even younger kids wanted to do that. So I urge you. So, I know we have a lot of work ahead, but I want to make sure that we all understand that we in Florida are in all of this together and we are so blessed and I am so blessed to have this position.

Josie Tomayo ([10:47](#)):

So I want to thank all the sponsors, but if you would like to volunteer to help those in the field, please go to [www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org). And also if you would like to make a donation, go to [www.Floridadisasterfund.org](http://www.Floridadisasterfund.org) or text to 2 0 2 2 2. We also have a QR code where if you wanna text and if you have questions about it, we have people on the line ready to answer your questions at any time. So thank you all very much for having me. It is a privilege. I, as the first lady says, I have to go back and raise more money, but thank you so much and you all have a blessed day and it's a pleasure to be here. And thank you First Lady.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([11:34](#)):

And I would be remiss last night too, we were, you know, obviously here in northeast Florida, we are big friends and fans of the Van Zans, Leonard Skynyrd. So last night we were at a concert with them in Hollywood at the Hard Rock Casino, and they made a hundred thousand dollars donation, which was matched by the Seminole tribe. So that's 200,000 thousand dollars more that we had. I would also say last night, you'll probably see in the pictures, yes, we had our five, four and two year old with us when we went to the Van Zan Brothers concert. So that was a little interesting. But it really is an all in effort across the state from our family's perspective and beyond to ensure that we are raising as much money as humanly possible. We are not gonna lay off the gas.

First Lady Casey DeSantis ([12:14](#)):

You're gonna see a lot of us out and about. Josie's on the phone. I'm gonna be on the phone doing press conferences and just asking people, do whatever they can to support the fund because it will make a huge difference at the end of the day in someone's lives. When they are looking for avenues to get relief, this may be one of the biggest ones that gets them back on their feet. So I can't thank the Northeast Florida community enough for everything that they've done to support good people in need. And so with that, any questions? If not, we're on to the next stop. So God bless you guys. Thank you so much for being here.