

24

2024 AMBASSADORS

SPIRIT OF GIVING CHAMPIONS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Philanthropically-minded companies and individuals engage with an incredibly vibrant and diverse ecosystem of nonprofit organizations powering good in Sarasota and Manatee.

ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK
ART CENTER SARASOTA
BLAZE OF HOPE
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF SARASOTA AND
DESOTO COUNTIES
CAT DEPOT
EARLY LEARNING COALITION
OF SARASOTA COUNTY
EDUCATION FOUNDATION
OF SARASOTA COUNTY
HARVEST HOUSE
HOLIDAY HOUSE SRQ
IMPACT100 SRQ
MANATEE COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
MOTE MARINE LABORATORY
& AQUARIUM
NAMI SARASOTA
RINGLING COLLEGE
OF ART & DESIGN
SAFE CHILDREN COALITION
SARASOTA CUBAN
BALLET SCHOOL
SAVE OUR SEABIRDS
SPARCC
SUGAR'S GIFT, INC.
TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN
OF MANATEE COUNTY
THE BISHOP MUSEUM
THE SARASOTA BALLET
URBANITE THEATRE
YMCA OF SOUTHWEST
FLORIDA

HOLIDAY HOUSE SRQ

HOLIDAY HOUSE SRQ IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION BRINGING THE MAGIC OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON TO STUDENTS AT TITLE 1 SCHOOLS IN SARASOTA. Founded in 2021 by Sepi Ackerman and Jenny Infanti, the organization transforms ordinary space in a school into an enchanting gift shop, allowing children to select five presents for family members, friends, or even pets, plus something wonderful for themselves—completely free of charge. By creating this magical experience, Holiday House SRQ ensures every child can enjoy the holidays and learn the gift of giving, without the pressure of financial limitations. In the majority of cases, this is the student's only holiday experience of the year, and even more importantly—it's one of the rare instances when a student learns the joy of giving. Allowing a child to select gifts for people that mean the most to them is an empowering, lasting and unique experience. **THE INITIATIVE HAS GROWN FROM ITS INAUGURAL EVENT** at Emma E. Booker Elementary to serve multiple schools, including Wilkinson, Alta Vista, and now in its fourth year, expanding to Brentwood Elementary. **AT THE HEART OF THE EVENT**, the magical gift shop is adorned with festive decor, Students browse a wide array of presents and the joyful atmosphere is filled with holiday music playing in the background. While waiting their turn to shop, the students enjoy snacks and draw holiday cards. Once it's their turn, a personal shopper assists them with the utmost care in their selection, making the entire experience truly memorable. When the children finish selecting their gifts, they are provided with wrapping paper, gift bags and gift tags to complete the experience—tied up perfectly with a bow (pun intended)!



M **MISSION MOMENT:** In addition to providing holiday gifts, Holiday House SRQ is committed to addressing critical needs within the schools. Previous efforts include distributing brand new sneakers to every student at Alta Vista Elementary, ensuring all students had comfortable and supportive footwear. Other needs fulfilled included eliminating lunch debts, and providing families most in need with essential supplies to get them through winter break. The commitment continues this year as the organization now builds uniform closets where students in need can select items at no charge.

Community Engagement and Programming: The organization's success is fueled by the generosity of donors and volunteers. From local individuals, to family trusts, to generous grants from The Community Foundation of Sarasota County and The Junior League of Sarasota, the donations are paving the way for the organization to sustain and grow its programming. Volunteers are equally essential. They not only help transform spaces, but assist students shop during the event. Many volunteers have often expressed what a lasting impact it has left on them to witness students experiencing such joy.

The 2024 event will be held this year from December 9-12 simultaneously at all 4 schools. The mission of Holiday House SRQ is simple: to create exceptional holiday experiences and provide needed resources to Title 1 elementary schools. To learn more, donate, or volunteer, visit www.holidayhousesrq.org. Every contribution helps bring joy to students who need it most, embodying the true spirit of the holiday season.

HOLIDAYHOUSESQRQ.ORG

