

# Mireya Eavey, Philanthropic Newsmaker of the Year

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## NOTY

BY JACOB OGLES SRQ DAILY FRESHLY SQUEEZED CONTENT EVERY MORNING THURSDAY DEC 29, 2016



To solve the Gulf Coast's greatest social problems will require more than just raising money to distribute to region's neediest people, according to Mireya Eavey. Modern philanthropy requires more innovation, and since taking over as Sarasota area president for United Way Suncoast, she's made it her mission to change the mindset around giving. "We have to change into more of a community impact model," she explains. Thanks to that, *SRQ* names Mireya Eavey as the philanthropic newsmaker of the year.

Eavey took the reins at her new job in December 2015 but brought with her successful programs she had spearheaded for years. CareerEdge Funders Collaborative now operates as a United Way program, but still receives funding from Gulf Coast Community Foundation, a revenue source since the effort's launch in 2008. This year, the collaborative was designated as a National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Eavey more recently saw the graduation of a class of certified nursing assistants through a new adult education program hosted at Booker Middle School. The common thread in the programs has been creating opportunities not just for people to have a basic need satisfied, but also to have the prospects for their own future improved. Eavey empowers low- and middle-income people to get promoted to better jobs in their place of work or to embark on new professional opportunities that may have appeared out of reach. And in turn, this spurs economic development in the region and satisfies an

employer need here for skilled workers.

But like many a philanthropic leader, Eavey primarily feels motivated by the chance to help others. "I've lived in this community my entire life. I understand it and I'm connected to so many people that I know are struggling," she says. "I get to hear from them and then think of strategies to share with the United Way team." And in doing so, donations to her organization have gone up just as she focuses the organization to do the most with the funding they already have.

**Honorable Mention:** Mark Pritchett, Gulf Coast Community Foundation president, led a near-seamless leadership transition. John Annis, Community Foundation of Sarasota County senior vice president, spurred interest in the TwoGen approach to impactful philanthropy.

*All this week, SRQ Daily names a newsmaker of the year for 2016. Individuals selected were chosen by our editorial team based on meaningful impact within a field where they have demonstrated leadership, effectively redirecting community conversation in important and lasting ways. Read tomorrow's edition to learn the cultural and architectural newsmakers of the year.*