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Through Florida Blue Foundation Grant, Peace River Center Offers Free Mental Health First Aid Course to Talbot House, Additional Courses Coming in May

Lakeland, FL – Peace River Center, a nonprofit behavioral health organization serving Polk, Hardee, and Highlands Counties, recently provided free virtual Mental Health First Aid training to Talbot House Ministries staff members thanks to a four-year grant of more than \$250,000 from the Florida Blue Foundation. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches attendees how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. It gives attendees the skills they need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

“Mental health training is critical for Talbot House staff, who interact with individuals in crisis every day. Peace River Center’s Mental Health First Aid offered great resources to help us identify and respond to those facing mental health challenges,” said Dr. Brenda Reddout, Executive Director of Talbot House Ministries.

Since launching its MHFA program in 2016, Peace River Center (PRC) has trained more than 200 community members. The Florida Blue Foundation grant enabled PRC to expand the program, adding additional MHFA trainers for a total of four with plans to train more once COVID restrictions are lifted. Peace River Center is offering two in-person, socially-distanced training sessions during Mental Health Awareness Month on May 4 and May 25, 2021, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. at the Stuart Center, 1710 U.S. Hwy. 17 South, Bartow 33830. Participants will undergo temperature checks and screenings and will be encouraged to wear face masks. The facility holds 80 under COVID-19 rules (360 normally), but each MHFA course will be limited to 25 and trainers will be on stage with microphones for maximum social distancing. The May MHFA courses will be a blended format—two-hour online training and the remainder of the course in person. Those interested can sign-up for this free course by visiting www.PeaceRiverCenter.org/mhfa.

About Peace River Center

Peace River Center is a licensed and accredited, non-profit provider of mental health, substance use, and integrated medical services serving Polk, Highlands, and Hardee counties. Peace River Center provides options for people struggling with mental health and addiction, for children and adults coping with the trauma of abuse and violence, crisis intervention for people in acute need, and housing and community support and integration for people affected by domestic violence or whose recovery requires more support and time. Peace River Center offers inpatient, outpatient, home-, school- and community-based services, telehealth, and mobile programs to individuals, groups, and families. Peace River Center's dedicated and compassionate staff of more than 400 operate 36 programs out of 27 locations and provide 24/7 emergency psychiatric response services to the community through our mobile psychiatric Crisis Response Team. In FY2020, Peace River Center had contact with and provided services to more than 21,500 children, adolescents, adults, and seniors. For more information visit www.PeaceRiverCenter.org.