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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWFAS RECEIVES TWO PLEDGES FROM AREA BUSINESSES

Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) received a boost to its capital campaign this week with the announcement of two pledges from First Community Bank of Southwest Florida and Oswald, Trippe and Company to support construction of SWFAS' new Detoxification Center and Outpatient Treatment Facility

First Community Bank pledged \$25,000 to help equip the dining room, which will be named in the bank's honor.

Oswald, Trippe and Company pledged \$20,000 to fund the conference room of the Outpatient Treatment Facility, which will be named in their honor.

"We are very grateful to First Community Bank and Oswald, Trippe and Company for recognizing the importance of providing treatment for residents with the chronic disease of addiction, which impacts one in five people in our community. This is an issue that impacts every segment of our community, and they are both stepping up to help respond to this need," said SWFAS CEO Kevin B. Lewis.

SWFAS now has raised more than \$5.7 million toward the \$9.5 million cost of the new facility. Other major gifts have been received from the Lee County Commission, State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP), U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, The Kleist Family Foundation, Jim and Donna Sublett, Southwest Florida Community Foundation, Lee Memorial Health System, and the Gannett Foundation.

"There isn't a day that passes that we aren't forced to turn away people in need of immediate detoxification because there are no beds available," Lewis said. "Each day the headlines tell the stories of tragedies associated with untreated substance use disorders, and these consequences will continue until we can respond to this unmet need."

While the population at risk has nearly tripled in the past 20 years, Lewis said the number of detox beds has decreased from 28 beds in 1984 to 25 beds in 2007, due to the lack of resources to treat this chronic disease.

“Families need a place to turn in times of crisis,” Lewis said. “The Board of Directors is acutely aware of this need and is committed to raising the money needed to build a new facility.”

The new 40-bed Detoxification Center will be built on land on Evans Avenue donated by the City of Fort Myers under a long-term lease. The four-acre parcel formerly was the home of the Fort Myers Recreation Center adjacent to Southwest Regional Medical Center.

The planned 44,000 square foot facility also will include room for outpatient counseling and prevention offices now located on McGregor Boulevard as well as administrative staff.

The SWFAS Board of Directors and Capital Campaign Cabinet currently are requesting funding from local individuals, businesses, and foundations to help with the project.

SWFAS plans to break ground later in February with completion one year later.

SWFAS is the largest and oldest comprehensive substance abuse treatment and prevention program in Southwest Florida, serving 6,000 people per year from ages 9 to 90. SWFAS offers outpatient and residential programs for both adults and youngsters from eight locations in Southwest Florida. Fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on family income. In many cases, private insurance is accepted. SWFAS is a United Way agency.

For more information about the SWFAS capital campaign or to make a gift to SWFAS, call Lewis at 278-7595, ext. 700, or visit www.swfas.org.