



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Greg Giordano (727) 847-8179

Date: May 19, 2021

# ***Pasco Tax Collector's Offices Collecting Suitcases for the "Luggage of Love" Program***

**Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano** and staff collect donations of "gently-used" luggage, suitcases, and other travel-related bags throughout the year. The items are used to equip displaced children and families with new and/ or "gently-used" suitcases. The kids and families in need are identified by the *Luggage of Love* program, which is coordinated in Pasco County by the **University of Florida's Pasco Extension Office**. The children, who often must travel with caseworkers into foster care, or are otherwise removed from their homes due to emergency situations, historically have only had plastic garbage bags in which to carry their clothing and personal belongings. The luggage adds a level of dignity to a child who is most likely experiencing one of the most traumatic events in their young life (i.e. being removed from their home). In other cases single mothers, often

escaping domestic violence, are the recipients of the luggage for themselves and their children.

The staff of the **Pasco County Tax Collector's Office** continue to respond to the call for help. Staff and members of the public periodically drop off suitcases and other bags which are subsequently delivered to the *Luggage of Love* program. Right now, the supply of suitable cases is low, and the demand continues to grow.

"Thank you so very much for the donations we have received in the past," comments **Elizabeth Urquiola, Program Coordinator for the UF Pasco Extension Office** & the *Luggage of Love* program. "We can't thank our community enough for the amazing generosity. We need to keep our closets full because children and mothers may be in need at any time. Please help spread the love to our displaced children in Pasco County through our *Luggage of Love* program. Your donations will always be put to good use."

"It is heartbreaking to think that a child or a mother in distress may only have plastic garbage bags which they must use to carry their belongings," remarks **Tax Collector Mike Fasano**. "I am so proud of both our staff and members of the community who have supported this program over the past few years. Donations of everything from suitcases to duffle bags and backpacks are the lifeblood of this charity. If you have not given before and have some unused luggage you could donate, please reach out to our office. We will work with you in any way that we can to help get the luggage into the hands of those most in need."

If you would like to donate luggage or would like to learn more about the program please contact our point person for the program **Assistant Tax Collector Greg Giordano** at 727-847-8179 or the "**Luggage of Love**" Program Coordinator **Elizabeth Urquiola** at 352-521-1254, x5325. Donations of luggage may be dropped off at any of the five tax collector offices in the county. Please visit [www.pascotaxes.com](http://www.pascotaxes.com) for tax office locations and hours of operation.

[PHOTOS ATTACHED – Elizabeth Urquiola with luggage donated by the Pasco County Tax Collector’s Office staff members & Greg Giordano with a delivery of luggage donated by members of the community]

###

