

# A preview of the social season

**Shannon Donnelly**

Palm Beach Daily News  
USA TODAY NETWORK

This summer, Laura and Ike Perlmutter bought dinner, breakfast and lunch — for thousands of Palm Beach County families hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

So did Claudia and Nelson Peltz.  
And Leni and Peter May.

And Hallie Dunn and Matt Peltz.

The four families funded weekly donations of tons of food to the Palm Beach County Food Bank.

“As the number of hungry residents continues to grow at an alarming rate, we are in need of donations, now more than ever,” said Karen Erren, executive director for the Palm Beach County Food Bank, in response to the donations.

Before the pandemic, the Palm Beach County Food Bank provided access to nutritious food for about 100,000 Palm Beach County residents every month.

But as the local economy spiraled downward, that demand more than doubled as more people were left without jobs and income.

“We have been doubling our distribution from 100,000 pounds to at least 200,000 pounds per week. Because of the wonderful generosity of these Palm Beach families who strongly believe in supporting the local community, the food bank is able to reach more of our neighbors throughout the county who are struggling to feed their families,” Erren said.

Typically, the Food Bank procures more than 5 million pounds of food annually from grocery stores, restaurants, food distributors, wholesalers and other sources, and provides it to almost 200 local community partners and programs, including food pantries, soup kitchens and residential housing programs.

In the wake of the pandemic, food donations have become scarce, and almost a third of its partner agencies have had to close their doors, according to a release from the organization.

The families’ weekly donations — made in cooperation with Sysco Corp., a large food distribution company — contain perishable and non-perishable foods including rice, canned goods, vegetables, cooking oil, cereal, bread, meat, potatoes, cheese, yogurt, cold cuts, condiments and pasta.

The first food delivery from the Palm

Beach families totaled 8 tons when it was unloaded at the food bank’s Lantana warehouse.

In addition to the food bank, the families committed to providing meals to both Good Samaritan and St. Mary’s medical centers for two months, starting in April in cooperation with the Wendy’s casual food chain.

Nelson Peltz is chairman of the board of Wendy’s, and Peter May is the vice chairman.

Matthew Peltz, Nelson’s son, also is a board member.

The hospital meals, as well as the families’ ongoing food donations to five hospitals in New York City, will also continue through the pandemic.

“We would like to thank the Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Foundation, the Nelson and Claudia Peltz Family Foundation, Matt Peltz and Hallie Dunn, and the Leni and Peter May Foundation for this initiative,” said Maggie Gill, chief executive officer of the Tenet Palm Beach Health Network.

“I know our staff is very appreciative of the support we’ve received from our community as we continue to provide compassionate care for our patients.”

“We all believe it is so important to help our neighbors and support our local health care workers during this crisis,” said Laura and Ike Perlmutter in a joint statement from a family spokesperson.

“This has been our home for 30 years, and we want to give back. The Palm Beach County Food Bank and the hospitals are working tirelessly to serve our community and we are all honored to support them,” they said.

Sally Soter knows that when it comes to heart disease, anatomy can be destiny.

Statistically, heart attacks occur more often in men. But when a woman suffers



**Nelson Peltz**



**Claudia Peltz**



**Peter May**



**Leni May**

**See PREVIEW, Page 5**

# Preview

Continued from Page [4](#)

a heart attack, her chances of dying from it — either immediately or from later complications — are higher.

Within five years of a heart attack, 47% of the women will die, develop heart failure, or suffer from a stroke, compared with 36% of men.

Sally Soter wanted to do something about that. To that end, Soter and her husband, Bill — with support from the Soter Kay Foundation, which is led by her daughter and grandchildren — have donated \$5.9 million to the American Heart Association.

Of the gift, \$5.6 million extends the couple's support of New York University's Sarah Ross Soter Center for Women's Cardiovascular Research, established by an earlier donation from the Soters.

This center, launched by Soter at NYU and under the direction of Dr. Judith Hochman and Dr. Harmony Reynolds, is part of the Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" research network.

Hochman's and Reynolds' research is



**Soter**

focused exclusively on women and the biological variables affecting health and disease, including stress.

"We are in awe of Sally's, and her husband, Bill's, desire to make a positive impact for the future of women's cardiovascular care," said Hochman.

"Through their generous support ... we will continue to unlock new ways to treat, beat and prevent cardiovascular disease in women."

"The research program established by the Soter family has identified completely new findings in women with heart attack," said Reynolds, the center director. "We are grateful ... for the opportunity to build on these results, breaking new ground to investigate gender as a biological factor in heart attack."

The remainder of the gift, \$300,000 from the family's Soter Kay Foundation, will remain in the community to support hypertension and diabetes management programs for at-risk populations.

Palm Beach County residents with unmanaged high blood pressure and di-

**See [PREVIEW, Page 6](#)**

# Preview

Continued from Page 5

abetes will have access to free blood pressure equipment, diabetes education and tailored health-care support at 20 local federally qualified health centers. The program's goal is to reach 200,000 people, especially women, who account for 65% of the local population that visit those health centers.

Statistically, women are also more likely to have high blood pressure and physician-diagnosed diabetes.

"Caring for the most underserved communities and addressing underlying health inequities, which are palpable during the COVID-19 pandemic, is essential to moving our mission forward," said Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association. "Three generations of Sally's family have made it their life's work to give back to their communities."

Heart disease in women is a topic close to Sally Soter's ... well, heart. She suffers from atrial fibrillation.

"I'm delighted to support the lifesaving work of the American Heart Association alongside my husband, Bill, to be a

relentless force for good," said Soter. "I hope this gift will benefit generations of women to come through scientific discovery under the great leadership of Dr. Hochman and Dr. Reynolds."

"For decades, the work of the AHA has been personal for Sally, who with her husband Bill is accelerating women's research and helping reverse the statistic of 1 in 3 women dying of heart disease and stroke annually," Brown said.

Soter's passion and involvement with the American Heart Association spans decades. To date, she and her husband have contributed more than \$16 million to the association.

Palm Beach resident and Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross is not blind to the evils of racism.

He watched it with his own eyes.

"Growing up in Detroit, I saw firsthand what racism did to tear apart our community, destroy lives and further inequality," he said in a 2015 interview.

But it was a conversation with Draymond Green, a professional basketball player for the Golden State Warriors, that was Ross' bugle call.

"In 2015, Stephen and I had several candid conversations about race," Green



Ross

told the Chronicle of Philanthropy.

"Specifically, we discussed if people are born racist or if it's learned behavior. We both agreed that no one is born racist and that we needed to

educate the younger generation if we were going to create change," Green said.

Shortly after that conversation, Ross slapped down a chunk of his substantial fortune and founded RISE, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality.

RISE is a nonprofit with a mission to eliminate racial discrimination, champion social justice and improve race relations through sports.

"If there is any place where there is real equality, it's sports," Ross said. "The sports community is uniquely positioned to break down barriers, open conversations, impact youth and be an effective catalyst for social progress."

The Black Lives Matter protests over the summer, fueled by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, led Ross to underscore his commitment with another gift to RISE, this one \$13 million.

The funds, to be distributed over four years, are earmarked for an expansion of

the nonprofit's mission to organizations such as NASCAR, the National Lacrosse League, PGA of America, Professional Women's Hockey Players Association, United States Tennis Association and USA Track & Field.

The gift brings Ross' total support of the anti-racism initiative to \$30 million.

"I started RISE based on the belief that our nation must address the scourge of racism directly to achieve true unity," said Ross. "Now more than ever, our mission and the need for this work is clear."

Sports brings together athletes, coaches and fans of all races, uniting us with shared experiences and common goals," Ross said. "It's an opportunity to harness that unifying power."

Ross, who divides his time between Palm Beach and New York, is a graduate of the University of Michigan. He founded the Related Companies, a New York real-estate development firm.

He is a billionaire philanthropist and has appeared on the Philanthropy 50 — the Chronicle of Philanthropy's annual ranking of the nation's most generous givers — three times, and is perennial listee of the Forbes 400 billionaires list.