



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
of Southwest Louisiana

Oct. 28, 2020

Contact: Sara Judson, CEO, (337) 304-0347, sjudson@foundationswla.org, foundationswla.org

Community Foundation Receives \$2.5 million Grant to Plan Calcasieu's Future

Grant is from Angela and David Filo, who grew up in Moss Bluff and co-founded Yahoo!

The co-founder of Yahoo!, who grew up in the Lake Charles area, and his wife have donated \$2.5 million to the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana. The Foundation will use the generous grant to underwrite a master plan for Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, which will be led by top land planners to help us rebuild a more resilient region.

“We thank Angela and David Filo for this generous gift to the community where he was raised,” said Sara Judson, CEO of the the Foundation. “The opportunity to have exceptional planners working with our local community to rebuild with resilient and equitable plans for housing, transportation and more is a silver lining from hurricanes Laura and Delta.”

“Our family is grateful to be able to support the work that the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana is leading. This is an organization that knows its community and that will be here for the long-haul helping Lake Charles build back better and more resilient,” said David Filo.

“In the organizations we support, we are always looking for community-owned solutions and leadership. Those who are affected most can create and implement the most lasting change in their communities, that is why we are excited contribute to this fund,” added Angela Filo.

Master plans have guided other cities and parishes after disasters. They are opportunities to rethink how places function, from new land codes that help disadvantaged areas thrive to rearranging public services to provide greater returns to the community. New Orleans and Houston are two areas where master plans have reimagined how people live after devastating storms. In Baton Rouge, master plans reinvigorated the downtown area, and are supporting a

rising Health District and the redevelopment of LSU lakes into a spectacular gathering place for the entire community.

At age six, Filo moved to Moss Bluff, a suburb community to Lake Charles. He graduated from Sam Houston High School in 1984, earned a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from Tulane University and a master's from Stanford University. With Jerry Yang, Filo started an Internet portal in 1994. A pioneer in helping people discover sites on the young Web, the project turned into Yahoo!, the first popular Web directory.

Before Angela and David Filo's donation, the Foundation had raised \$6.5 million from thousands of gifts for hurricane relief, granting the money to nonprofits to pay for food and other essentials, and to help people remove debris from homes and businesses. The Filo's gift of \$2.5 million will give Calcasieu the opportunity to prepare for the future, with the master plan guiding the government, businesses, nonprofits and people to rebuild smarter and stronger.

The Foundation will work with elected officials and community leaders to organize the plan, with the goal of hiring planners and other experts that deliver ambitious blueprints for the people of Calcasieu and Cameron.

"We are grateful to the Filos for making this master planning process possible for the Lake Charles area. Their willingness to provide the dollars for us to create a plan to rebuild in a resilient and equitable way will forever be appreciated by our community," said Mayor Nic Hunter. "I look forward to working with other elected officials, interested citizens and business owners and the Community Foundation to make a positive, lasting impact in Southwest Louisiana."

Based in Lake Charles, the Foundation has been central to community building across Southwest Louisiana for more than a decade. It has a durable affiliation with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which has raised and granted more than \$150 million for disaster recovery since Hurricane Katrina.