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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NEW INITIATIVE ON AGING WITH DIGNITY AND INDEPENDENCE**

*A local advisory committee helps guide research and discovery*

**SARASOTA, FL October 27, 2010** – Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE) has been chosen to partner with The Patterson Foundation (TPF) on the Aging with Dignity and Independence Initiative, a multi-year project with an end goal of creating innovative and technological approaches to help people 65 years and older age with dignity and independence.

Over the next year, SCOPE and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee will engage residents through community forums, focus groups and surveys, seeking to learn from the experiences of older adults as well as the broader community. This research will honor the wisdom of the local lived experience to age with dignity and independence as well as provide a greater understanding of the dimensions of aging.

An advisory committee of local leaders is providing direction to the initial research and discovery phase of the initiative. Advisory Committee members are: Laretta Anderson, Pam Baron, Silvia Blanco, Bob Carter, Tom Collins, Donna Dunio, Doug Heinlen, Sarabeth Kalajian, Carolyn Mason, Charlene Monagas, Tom Pfaff, Nancy Schlossberg, Jim Shirley, Jane Smiley, Jeff Troiano, JoAnn Westbrook and Fay Williams.

“We are pleased that this initiative is engaging the local community and that the advisory committee members are reaching out to make that happen,” said Tim Dutton, executive director of SCOPE. “We are grateful to The Patterson Foundation for their desire to explore new thinking through this initiative and their willingness to first begin by listening to the community – capturing the wisdom and experiences of older adults and those closest to them.”

**About SCOPE**

SCOPE is a nonprofit organization that connects and inspires citizens to create a better community. For more information, visit [www.scopexcel.org](http://www.scopexcel.org).

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