

Civic Engagement Opportunities

Make a difference in the lives of First Coast children and families.

Changing For Impact

Based on research beginning in 2001, United Way's Board of Trustees and Board of Directors unanimously approved changing United Way's investment model in January 2005. This new model focuses investments on root causes of social problems we face in our community to achieve greater results in the long term.

Three initial focus issues were identified in the summer of 2005:

- **Early childhood success**
- **Helping at-risk students achieve**
- **Senior independence and engagement**

With a high school graduation rate hovering around 60% for Duval County and a senior population that is expected to grow by 31% to 230,000 persons age 60 and older, these areas were identified as critical opportunities to address for the future success of Northeast Florida. By focusing on these three issues, United Way is impacting the continuum of life for Northeast Florida residents capitalizing on the best opportunity to generate significant returns on the investment of our donors.

In 2006, two groups of leadership volunteers were assembled to study two questions: Why are our preschoolers not ready for school and why do students drop out of school. After 11 months of research including hearing from local and national experts and reviewing local and national data and research, two strategies were developed:

Success By 6 addressing preschool readiness

Achievers For Life keeping students at-risk of dropping out on track to graduation

A group of leadership volunteers had been studying the opportunities and challenges that a growing senior population provides our community since 2003. Once senior independence and engagement was identified as a focus issue, this volunteer group, the **Life: Act 2** Partnership Council, accelerated their work securing a \$900,000 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to help seniors transitioning home from the hospital. In addition, The Life: Act 2 Partnership Council began implementing projects to increase senior engagement in the community.

Additional information regarding the details of the strategies developed for United Way's focus issues is provided in the following pages.

Achievers For Life (AFL)-Helping Students Achieve

Achievers For Life is a program for 6th graders at risk for failure. It began in the Arlington area and this year expanded to Andrew Jackson High School feeder schools Mathew Gilbert and Northwestern Middle School. AFL provides better ways to identify students at risk and helps principals increase parent engagement at school. It has 4 key components:

- high quality mentoring support for students
- training to help parents effectively motivate and equip their child for success
- social support to help stabilize struggling families
- counseling for students and families who need it

Partners include Duval County Public Schools, Jewish Family & Community Services, Communities In Schools and committed volunteer mentors from around Northeast Florida.

Achievers for Life

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Achievement Advocates - Volunteers are needed to serve as Achievement Advocates. Achievement Advocates make a two-year commitment to a sixth grade student to meet with them weekly and help them achieve their academic and social goals. The Achievers For Life initiative has a goal of 100 volunteer mentors for this school year. Mentor training and on-going support and assistance is provided through Communities In Schools of Jacksonville.

Contact: Jan Morse, 390-3267

Future Volunteer Opportunities

AFL Partnership Council – Serve on a volunteer group to guide the strategic direction of Achievers For Life and research additional opportunities to address student achievement.

Contact: Connie Hodges, 390-3218

Success By 6

Success By 6 provides 2-year grants so that children of low-income working families who do not receive state assistance can attend high quality preschools when they are 3 and 4. Parents and caregivers learn strategies to enhance their child's development through mandatory sessions. Targeted training helps teachers get parents on their team.

A first-year evaluation by the Florida Institute of Education was so encouraging that *Success by 6* was expanded from 31 grants to a second year total of 100 grants. In just one school year, *Success by 6* participants had made substantial gains, including:

- 26% increase in vocabulary development
- 15% increase in school readiness
- improved understanding of direction/position, self-social awareness, texture/material, quantity and time/sequence – all important concepts for future success in school

Success By 6

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Readers – Volunteers are needed to read to Success By 6 classrooms, conduct book drives for Success By 6 preschoolers and complete work projects at Success By 6 centers.

Contact: Jan Morse, 390-3267

Future Volunteer Opportunities

Success By 6 Partnership Council – Serve on a volunteer group to guide the strategic direction of Success by 6 and research additional opportunities to address preschool readiness for school. **Contact: Connie Hodges, 390-3218**

Life: Act 2

A community collaboration led by United Way, **Life: Act 2**, takes a pro-active approach to issues affecting older adults. This initiative mobilizes and coordinates senior-related resources, offers programs to assure seniors' easy access to integrated health and social service systems, and develops programs that promote a shift in the way our community views and values seniors and the aging process.

Elder Care Advocate Through the support of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Elder Care Advocate program was established. Under the program, and Elder Care Advocate (ECA) networks with hospital discharge planners to assist seniors identified as having additional social needs once leaving the hospital. These seniors receive purchased services, referrals to community agencies, follow-up phone calls after discharge to ensure they have transitioned well, and tool kits of useful resource information. This initiative will assist seniors as they navigate home from the hospital and allow them to recover well at home.

- **98% of participants said the services they received met their needs**
- **97% of participants stated that they would not have gotten the services they needed without the help of the Elder Care Advocate**

Life: Act 2

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Senior Services: Volunteers are needed to assemble "Congestive Heart Failure hospital discharge information toolkits" for distribution at a local hospital project.

Contact: Jeannie Burhans, 390-3292

Training required: An orientation briefing will be provided for those volunteers who assist with the assembling of materials.

Women In Local Leadership (WILL)- Inform-Involve-Inspire

WILL's Mission is to engage women leaders in addressing critical social issues by contributing their time, talent and financial support to achieve positive, long-term change in our community. WILL plans several activities that offer women a variety of ways to make a difference. There are opportunities to meet other women leaders, learn about the community's needs and to make an impact through a number of volunteer efforts supporting United Way's Success By 6 initiative, a program that addresses the issues of early childhood development.

Contact: Kit Thomas, 390-3253

Atlantic Circle- Get Involved. Get Informed. Get Connected.

Atlantic Circle provides networking opportunities for emerging leaders (ages 40 and under) as well as professional development seminars and volunteer projects with United Way partner agencies.

Contact: Kit Thomas, 390-3253

The Stein Fellowship

The Stein Fellowship is a one-of-a-kind program that brings together young professionals and established community leaders to promote philanthropy and leadership; and to inspire students to achieve. Each Stein Fellow has the opportunity to establish a unique relationship with a community leader, as well as mentor a student who is at risk of dropping out .

Contact: Kit Thomas, 390-3253

Born Learning - Parent/Caregiver Workshop Leader

Volunteers are needed to conduct turn-key, interactive workshops with parents and other caregivers of children ages 0-5 through workplaces and other community venues. Workshops help parents and caregivers who either don't know exactly what actions to take to prepare young children for school, or feel they don't have time to do what is needed. **Contact: Melodie Dove, 390-3225**

Training required: Training in use of materials and curriculum, as well as facilitation skills is provided.

Full Service Schools

Full Service Schools of Jacksonville is a collaborative approach to serve the therapeutic, health and social service needs of at-risk students and families in Duval County. Since the creation of the first Full Service School in the Springfield community in 1991, Full Service Schools of Jacksonville has grown to eight targeted neighborhoods in Duval County. They are: Arlington Family Resource Center, Beaches Resource Center, Englewood Family Resource Center, Greater Springfield Family Resource Center, Paxon Family Resource Center, Ribault Family Resource Center, Sandalwood Family Resource Center and Westside Family Resource Center.

Full Service Schools

Current Volunteer Opportunities:

Oversight Committee Members: Volunteers, who are residents of the community that the specific site serves, are needed as voting members. For other sites, volunteers are requested to serve as non-voting resource members. In this capacity, these persons are not required to live or work in the neighborhood, but have an interest or skill needed by the oversight committees in order to perform certain functions. Examples of tasks include: organizing a health fair or the design and analysis of a needs/assets assessment.

Tutors: Volunteers are needed to provide after-school homework assistance at all sites.

Mentors: Volunteers work with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida and Take Stock in Children to mentor an individual young student. **Training required:** Up to 8 hours of training

Time commitment: One hour per week for one year

Contact: Shelley Grant, 390-3247

Resource Management - Community Fund Investment

United Way Community Fund donors are needed to help allocate funds to programs successfully addressing serious or critical health and human service issues in Northeast Florida.

Contact: Melanie Patz, 390-3243

Training required: A group training session in March will provide a recap of the program review process, an overview of the health and well-being of Northeast Florida, and the funding criteria.

Time commitment: 30 -40 hours during the months of March – May.

RealSense Prosperity Campaign

The RealSense Prosperity Campaign helps low-income families achieve their financial goals through free tax assistance to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit and/or to attend financial classes that prepare them to start matched savings accounts. **Contact: Linda Hemphill, 390-3237**

Current Volunteer Opportunities

\$ **Outreach Specialist:** Fill speaking engagements and staff information display tables at community events, as requested by local businesses or organizations. Outreach helps educate and promote all services offered through RealSense. No public speaking experience necessary.

Training required: One, 2-hour training session is required to learn all aspects of RealSense background, mission, and services.

Time commitment: Outreach Specialists receive periodic e-mail requests for various speaking engagements and participation in community events. Volunteers only respond to the events they would like to help cover. All volunteers are provided with marketing materials/giveaways for any events in which they participate.

\$ **Tax Preparer:** Learn limited tax law and prepare taxes via an on-line program (Tax Wise).

Training required: 16 to 20 hours of formal training, by either AARP Tax-Aide or the IRS, requiring the successful completion of a certification test at the end of the class.

Time commitment: 30* - 40** hours between January 15 and April 15. (*VITA volunteers; AARP Tax-Aide volunteers**)

\$ **Tax Site Greeter/Prosperity Coach:** Greet taxpayers as they enter a free tax preparation site, keep the waiting room running smoothly, and inform tax payers about other RealSense services available to them, such as matched savings and financial education. Tasks include:

- ♦ Greet taxpayer clients; sign them in
- ♦ Review client paperwork to assure they have everything they need
- ♦ Refer clients to a financial counselor if one is present at that location
- ♦ Make certain clients get their taxes prepared according to their turn

Training required: 4 hours of training

Time commitment: 30 hours between January 15 and April 15

\$ **Quality Review Specialist:** Review completed tax returns to assure there are no glaring errors and that no preparation steps were missed. QR Specialists will also answer questions from newer tax preparers as necessary.

Training required: Training in tax law and Tax Wise software; previous tax prep experience (VITA or AARP Tax-Aide) preferred.

Time commitment: 30 hours between January 15 and April 15

\$ **Financial Education Trainer:** Facilitate *Money Smart*, a financial education class for community members interested in learning how to better manage their wealth and assets. Class locations vary.

Training required: 8 hours of training in the Money Smart curriculum.

Time commitment: Includes attending a *Money Smart* Train-the-Trainer session prior to teaching a class. Classes are offered weekdays, evenings, and Saturdays. Flexible time commitment.

United Way 2-1-1

United Way's 2-1-1 is our community's 24-hour information and referral helpline. It also serves as our community's suicide intervention hotline. Trained call center specialists respond to approximately 120,000 calls for help each year. **Contact: Bob Arnold, 390-3278, or Terri Swanson, 390-3283**

Current Volunteer Opportunities

2-1-1 Advisory Committee

Volunteers are needed to help guide 2-1-1 including establishing goals, planning for and implementing expansion plans, addressing needs identified. **Orientation and training provided for all new members.**

UW 2-1-1 Call Center Specialists

Volunteers with good communication and basic computer skills are needed to answer calls to 2-1-1 during times of high call volume. Volunteers will learn how to enter data into the call center database, the AIRS taxonomy, the UW 2-1-1 AVAYA phone system and how to answer suicide calls (depending on the volunteer). **40 hours of training and background screening required.**

UW 2-1-1 Follow-Up Specialists

Volunteers with good communication and basic computer skills are needed to follow-up with callers to see if they have received assistance. **10-20 hours of training required.**