

Community News

JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

Vistakon's Days of Caring is a huge success



Volunteers spruce up a YMCA gym with a fresh coat of paint.

Since the mid 1990s, Vistakon has been a million dollar company. And this year, they engaged their employees beyond the campaign through a broad range of volunteer activities. Vistakon employees demonstrated the true meaning of LIVE UNITED, which included daily educational messages and more than 50 unique volunteer activities. Vistakon adopted the "Days of Caring" theme throughout its campaign, which has generated the largest per capita increase the company has ever achieved.

Susan Neadle, Vistakon's United Way Campaign Co-Chair, said "The Days of Caring idea started out as a way



Employees interact with teenage mothers with a craft activity at Children's Home Society.

to get employees engaged about why their donations were so important. By getting first-hand experience with United Way's activities, the entire campaign became meaningful. We started out with advocating, moved on to volunteering and closed with giving."

The phrase GIVE + ADVOCATE + VOLUNTEER was also promoted on a variety of items, including bracelets, large banners and flyers, and was also the focus during the whole campaign. More than 700 employees volunteered, contributing more than 2,300 hours.

Vistakon helped support its employees by allowing them to volunteer during their work day, engaging in activities ranging from resume-writing workshops for teens to making scarves for the homeless. Coretta Hill, Director of Volunteer and Community Engagement for United Way, coordinated the volunteer events to ensure every employee had an experience with impact.

Ms. Neadle wasn't sure what to expect before the campaign, but soon saw a change in the morale of employees. "There has been a definite groundswell of 'feel good' across the organization. There was such a variety of activities, each one of them left people rewarded with a sense of fulfillment for having done something that was genuinely helping others."

Giving employees a number of

volunteering options also allowed more of them to participate. "Offering internal volunteer opportunities for individuals whose jobs were not conducive to them going off-site, as well as external volunteer opportunities, gave everyone the chance to get in on the fulfilling, sometimes hard, experience of volunteering. There was so much buzz about the campus from those that completed their volunteer activities that the Days of Caring kind of took on a life of its own."

(Story continued inside...)



Volunteers engaged in early learning activities with preschoolers from Community Connections.



Vistakon employees help serve lunch at Clara White Mission.

Early Childhood Success: Claire

The first years of a child's life are critical to their development and readiness for kindergarten. Helping children build vocabulary and other key literacy skills is crucial to their success both in and out of the classroom. Before 3-year-old Claire began a Success By 6 program, her parents noticed she was having trouble articulating words and communicating with others.

Knowing this could present additional challenges for her in the classroom, she began meeting one-on-one with a speech therapist each week. Today, her teachers are amazed at her progress. Claire is now a talkative little girl eager to participate in classroom activities, has an extensive vocabulary and on target for kindergarten.



Atlantic Circle Kicks Off the 2010 Campaign Year

Attendees at this year's Atlantic Circle kickoff were able to see first-hand the benefits of supporting young people with mentors. In fact, one of the speakers at the event was Dominic Cummings, who personally benefitted from a mentor when he was growing up.

More than 75 Atlantic Circle members gathered at the home of Diane and Steve Halverson to kick off the 2010 campaign year on October 19. In addition to hearing Dominic's personal success story, his mentor also commented on why volunteering is important and the impact it made on his life.

During the event, the Give 20 campaign for Atlantic Circle was unveiled. The new program challenges members to volunteer for United Way or a partner agency for 20 hours over the next year. Every member that meets the goal will be invited to celebrate their accomplishment next year.

"The members in Atlantic Circle are extremely active in the community," said Chair Justin Spiller. "This program is a fun way to challenge the group to engage more with United Way and the great work that is being done by partner agencies. I'm planning on seeing a large group at the celebration next year."

To learn more about the work of Atlantic Circle and how to get involved, see story below.



Steve and Diane Halverson host United Way's young professionals' kickoff in their home.



Stein Fellows Karen Estella Smith and Jessica Ligator



Atlantic Circle members listened as the group's chair, Justin Spiller, talked about United Way's impact in the community.

Atlantic Circle Wins Prestigious Young Professionals Award

Members of United Way's Atlantic Circle always knew they were part of an exceptional young professionals group. Now the group has a shiny award to prove it.



Justin Spiller, Betty and Jack Demetree, honorary event chairs, and Heather Corey, AFP president

On November 10, Atlantic Circle was recognized as the 2010 Outstanding Young Professional Organization by the First Coast Chapter of the Association for Fundraising Professionals. The award was presented during the 25th Annual National Philanthropy Day Luncheon at the Hyatt Regency.

"This award recognizes the commitment of more than 500 professionals that comprise Atlantic Circle,"

said Justin Spiller, Chair of the group. "The involvement of our members goes far beyond a financial contribution. Atlantic Circle members are making a positive impact in our community in a variety of ways, every single day."

Atlantic Circle is made up of individuals 40 years and younger who contribute \$500 or more annually and are interested in professional and philanthropic growth. The group provides opportunities to volunteer with United Way partner agencies, attend professional development seminars and enjoy networking events. Atlantic Circle's volunteer efforts target the focus issue Helping Students Achieve, which aims to increase on-time graduation in Northeast Florida. To find out more about Atlantic Circle, contact Sara Bomar, Manager of Affinity Groups and Special Accounts at 904.390.4016.

Vistakon (continued)

Not only was this campaign received well by employees, it helped people understand the value and importance of United Way's programs. Throughout the event, employees made comments such as, "I never understood where the dollars I contributed went, but now I see how important and worthwhile contributing to United Way is."

Needle envisions Vistakon conducting another event like Days of Caring in the future. "It was received so positively across the organization. The per capita donations this year were the highest we've ever achieved during a campaign, and the Days of Caring were a big part why. Volunteering made it all come home."

For more information about volunteerism, please call Coretta Hill at 904.390.3231.

Creating a Legacy

Often, we associate giving to United Way as making an annual gift through the campaign. But, there is another way to invest into United Way that is future-oriented and highly beneficial. It is called Legacy Giving. Legacy Donors are donors who have either made an outright gift to United Way's endowment or indicated that they have included United Way in their will or estate plans. These donors have determined that they would like to support United Way, forever. Their commitment to our community extends far beyond the needs of this year, this decade or this generation.

You can plan now to make a contribution that will continue to support United Way's mission and help people in need past your lifetime. Whether you intend to make a gift now or in the future, the United Way offers a variety of Legacy Giving options to meet the philanthropic and financial objectives that are important to you.

Here are some of the more popular ways to support United Way's endowment and create a Legacy Gift:

- Make a bequest in your will
- Donate a life insurance policy
- Give through your retirement plan
- Contribute appreciated securities (stock, bonds, mutual fund shares etc.)
- Give through a charitable annuity or a charitable trust

Of course, your financial advisor can identify which option is best for you. To learn more or to make a Legacy gift, email Mark LeMaire, Vice President of Planned Giving, at markl@uwnfl.org or call, 904.390.3234.

United Way thanks the Community Builders and Loaned Executives for their help in supporting the 2010 campaign effort.

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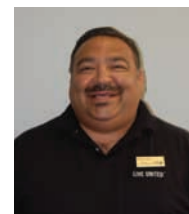
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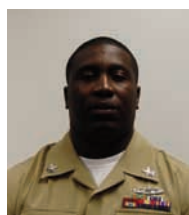
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Published by United Way of Northeast Florida's Marketing and Communications Dept.
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A Magical Kickoff for Women in Local Leadership

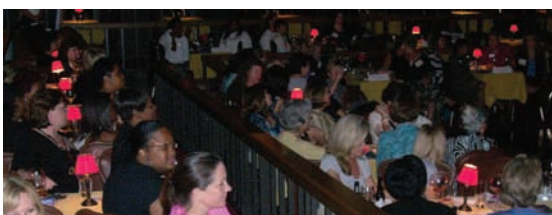
Members of United Way's Women in Local Leadership (WILL) celebrated the start of a new campaign year with a performance by world-renowned magician Michael Ammar.

During the October 28 event, more than 100 WILL members gathered at the Alhambra Theatre for this special night. Eight of the twelve WILL Born Learning volunteers were honored and attendees brought preschool books for children at United Way's Success By 6 Early Learning Centers.

"This amazing group of women has brought some magic into the lives of so many young people in our community," said Susanna Vance, WILL co-chair. "We thought it was appropriate to have a magician entertain and inspire the group as we prepare for another great year."

"The volunteers we are honoring have made a huge impact with Born Learning," said Katherine Foster, WILL co-chair. "Each one of them has donated countless hours and this is our chance to honor them for their generosity."

WILL engages women leaders in addressing critical social issues by contributing their time, talent and financial support to achieve positive change in Northeast Florida. To find out more about WILL, contact Sara Bomar, Manager of Affinity Groups and Special Accounts at 904.390.4016.



WILL members enjoying the magic show at the Kickoff event.



Magician Michael Ammar performs one of his tricks at the WILL event.

WILL BORN LEARNING VOLUNTEERS

Ingrid Thomas

Leslie Allen

Fratina Emanuel

Lisa Kidd

Michelle Ross

Joanne Diz

Jackie Brooks

LaShantah Holliday

Katherine Foster

Allison Kotowski

Jesse Bender

Irma Donaldson



WILL co-chairs Susanna Vance and Katherine Foster



The "LIVE UNITED" mimes entertained guests before the kickoff.

COMPANIES THAT HAVE HELD 2010 CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP EVENTS

- | | |
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