

The background features a large, stylized graphic of a hand with fingers spread, rendered in a dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several smaller, tilted rectangular images with color filters. These include: a person in a white lab coat and mask holding a device (blue filter); a group of people sitting and talking (blue filter); a person running on a path (red filter); a person looking at a phone (yellow filter); a group of children (red filter); and two men looking at a document (yellow filter).

2022-2023 IMPACT REPORT

their stories
START WITH YOU

United
Way



United Way of Central Florida



Dear United Way of Central Florida Supporters,

I hope this letter finds you well and filled with the same sense of anticipation and excitement that we feel as we share our annual Impact Report with you.

United Way of Central Florida's mission is to inspire our community to give, advocate and volunteer by identifying needs and mobilizing vetted resources to create positive, local change. Our 2022-2023 Impact Report serves as a testament to your unwavering support of that mission and the incredible work we can accomplish when we are United in Purpose.

Throughout the year, we tackled critical issues head-on, addressing the needs of our community with dedication and innovation. Your generosity, whether through donations, volunteer hours, or advocacy, has been the driving force behind these achievements.

This report not only recaps our accomplishments, but also showcases the stories of resilience, hope and transformation that define our community. It is a testament to the profound impact we can achieve when we come together.

As we look to the future, we see endless possibilities. Your continued support will enable us to build upon our successes, reach even more individuals in need, and create a brighter, more equitable Central Florida for all.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Your commitment to the United Way of Central Florida is a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change. We invite you to explore our Impact Report, and join us in celebrating the collective achievements of the past year.

Together, we are making a difference.

Ashley Bell Barnett,
Board of Directors Chair

Christina Criser Jackson,
President & CEO

MISSION VISION

To inspire our community to give, advocate and volunteer by identifying needs and mobilizing vetted resources to create positive, local change.

To unite our community and empower everyone to achieve their full potential.

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Community Volunteer

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Two Men And A Truck

Dr. Mark Codd

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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CHAIR
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Chief Ian Floyd

Polk County Sheriff's Office

Tip Fowler

Community Volunteer

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Brandon Giles

Polk State College

Lauren Giordano

Central Florida Speech & Hearing Center

Merissa Green

City of Haines City

Fred Heid

Polk County Public Schools

Deeley Hunt

Hunt Bros., Inc.

Dana Hurley

Allen & Co.

Kim Long

Polk Vision

Mark Miller

Harris Beach, LLC

Andy Oguntola

Polk State College

Emily Rogers

Emily Rogers Consulting & Coaching

Brittany Sale

Sale Insurance Agency, Inc.

Scott Sjoblom

Florida Dept. of Health in Polk County

Troy C. Smith

Speaker, Trainer, Coach

Emily Spath

Spath Jewelers

Ali Wright

Publix Super Markets, Inc.

Christina Criser Jackson

UWCF PRESIDENT & CEO

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Cortney Giles

Dana Hurley

Fran McAskill

Sterling Searcy

Michael W. Tamney

Joe Tedder

Jill Martin

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Ali Wright, Vice-Chair

Rachel Cashdollar

Jonathan Crain

Brian Haas

Christina Criser Jackson

Rod Crowley

Jes Garcia

Mandi Mitchell

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John Attaway

Mark Codd

Jonathan Crain

Don Elwell

Merissa Green

Jennifer Kincart Jonsson

Michael W. Tamney

Sarah Beth Wyatt

Ali Wright



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

We know there are no quick fixes to break the cycle of poverty, but through these initiatives we truly believe that we have the ability to give everyone in our community the opportunity to reach their full potential. Through our seven community impact initiatives, internal programs and 211 referral service, United Way donors are creating lasting change in Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties.

United Community Needs Assessment

This year United Way of Central Florida and GiveWell Community Foundation released the findings of the United Community Needs Assessment (UCNA). This two-year effort was undertaken to identify our community’s greatest challenges in the following areas: Economic & Employment Opportunities; Housing; Education; Food Security; Transportation/Infrastructure; and Quality of Life.

Residents from across the tri-county area explained directly what their needs were by filling out surveys in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole and by speaking up at focus groups. Along with the feedback from nearly 4,000 residents, recent studies from third-party sources were also incorporated.

The assessment allowed us to identify the most pressing needs of Polk, Highlands and Hardee County residents. For United Way of Central Florida, our Community Impact team evaluated the results to confirm that we’re continuing to fund services reaching those needs.

In partnership with GiveWell Community Foundation, we have hosted presentations and listening sessions to present the findings and also gather feedback from key stakeholders and community leaders.

Scan the QR code to view the full Tri-County Report.



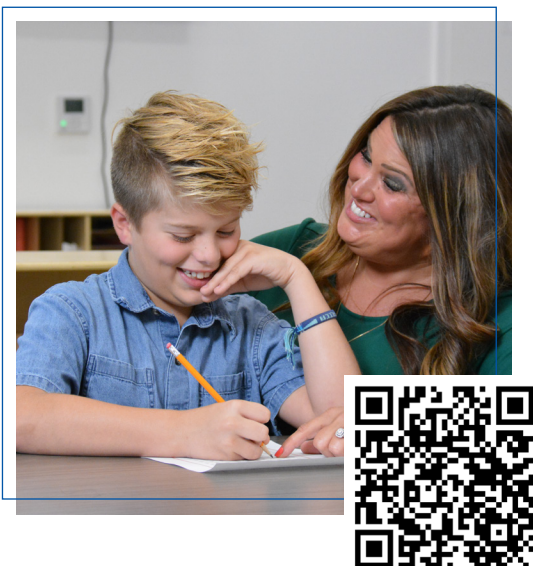


Academic Achievement

School is full of obstacles. For some, the challenges of these formative years are too great to overcome alone and can lead students to make the unfortunate choice to drop out. That is why UWCF and partners are working every day to prevent that outcome through tutoring, mentoring and more.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Suncoast
- Boy Scouts, Greater Tampa Bay Council
- Boys and Girls Club of Highlands County
- Boys and Girls Club of Polk County
- Camp Fire Sunshine Central Florida
- Girl Scouts of West Central Florida
- Girls, Inc. of Lakeland
- Girls, Inc. of Winter Haven
- Highlands County Family YMCA
- Learning Resource Center of Polk County, Inc.
- The Salvation Army of West Polk County
- YMCA of West Central Florida



Scan the QR code with your phone to hear an Academic Achievement success story.



Basic Needs

When local residents—no matter their socioeconomic status—are devastated by natural disasters, acts of violence, mental health concerns, homelessness or grief, UWCF and partners provide critical services to help stabilize short-term crises.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- American Red Cross, Mid-Florida Chapter
- Catholic Charities of Central Florida
- Champion for Children Foundation of Highlands County, Inc.
- Children's Home Society
- Chapters Health, Good Shepherd Hospice
- Hardee Help Center
- Heart of Florida Legal Aid Society, Inc.
- HELP of Fort Meade
- Peace River Center for Personal Development, Inc.
- The Salvation Army of East Polk County
- The Salvation Army of West Polk County
- Talbot House Ministries
- Youth & Family Alternatives, Inc.

211

211 helps the community by connecting individuals and families with the appropriate social services they need. This year, the total number of calls, texts and online inquiries were over 32,000 with the top three requests in housing/shelter, utilities and food.

The new 988 Mental Health Lifeline took in 760 calls.



Scan the QR code with your phone to hear a Basic Needs success story.

Community Partnership School

The community partnership school model is based on a strategy of forming a long-term partnership among four core partners: a school district, a university or college, a community-based nonprofit and a healthcare provider. This comprehensive model of a community school leverages the social and institutional capital of partners, making it possible for the school to offer resources and services that address the needs of the community.

The Community Partnership School goals include school readiness; student academic success; physical; social and emotional health; and parent and community engagement.

Through partnerships, we are providing services from all UWCF initiatives at Crystal Lake Elementary, A Community Partnership School in Lakeland.

CORE PARTNERS:

- Central Florida Health Care
- Heartland for Children
- Polk County Public Schools
- Southeastern University
- United Way of Central Florida



Early Childhood Education

Research shows that children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to graduate high school on time. Statistically, students who graduate high school are more likely to find a job that pays a livable wage, live healthier lives, stay out of the judicial system and have children who also graduate high school on time.

Through early childhood education partners and Success By 6 programs: The Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center, Master Teachers, Parent Lending Library and more, we are creating a world where every child has the opportunity to succeed.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Achievement Academy, Inc.
- Central Florida Speech & Hearing Center
- Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland
- Early Learning Coalition of Polk County
- Family Literacy Academy at Lake Wales
- Florida Children's Museum
- Learning Resource Center of Polk County, Inc.
- Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision, Polk Division
- The Salvation Army of West Polk County
- United Way of Central Florida Success By 6
- YMCA of West Central Florida



Scan the QR code with your phone to hear an Early Childhood Education success story.



End Hunger

We know that hunger is a pervasive problem across our community. Many families often have to choose between buying groceries or paying rent and the effects can be devastating – from poor health and malnourishment to impaired child development. By increasing access to healthy foods, 21 mobile food pantries are helping eliminate hunger for thousands of residents across Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Bartow Community Service Center
- Blessings & Hope Food Pantry
- B Street Community Service Center
- Central Assembly of God, House of Hope
- Central Florida Health Care
- Crystal Lake Elementary
- Cutting Edge Ministries
- Donald Bronson Community Center
- Feeding Tampa Bay
- First Missionary Baptist Church
- First United Methodist Church of Sebring
- Fort Meade Outdoor Recreation Area
- Freedom Tour
- Frostproof Care Center
- Hands for Homeless
- Help of Fort Meade
- Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church
- Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine
- Mulberry Community Service Center
- Mulberry RCMA
- Multiply Christian Church
- Peace River Park
- Pilgrim Rest Free Will Baptist Church
- Poinciana Community Park
- South Oak Church
- Trinity Worship Center
- Wahneta Baseball Park

Bi-monthly mobile food pantries provide 200+ families frozen meats, fresh produce and dry goods for a week to supplement nutritional needs between paychecks.



Financial Stability

UWCF addresses the root cause of problems to build a better future for individuals and our community. Our partnership for free tax preparation helped 10% of tax prep clients begin permanent savings accounts with the goal to supplement retirement. We provide budgeting expertise and saving disciplines to help families build a better future, and we provide individuals with job-skills training for increased income. UWCF partners help families manage debt and improve their credit, placing individuals on a path to financial independence.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Bartow Community Service Center
- Florida Children's Museum
- Frostproof Care Center
- Hands of Hope America
- Heart for Winter Haven
- Heart of Florida Legal Aid Society
- Mulberry Community Service Center
- Ridge Area Arc
- The Salvation Army of West Polk County
- Talbot House Ministries
- Women's Care Center of Bartow, Inc.
- Women's Resource Center





When it comes to accessing health services, a person's zip code should never be a deterrent to success, nor should it be a barrier to improved health. Yet for many, that's a daily reality. By making it easier for individuals to access substance abuse programs, receive quality health care and access nutritious foods, we're working to help everyone get—and stay—healthy.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Alliance for Independence, Inc.
- Catholic Charities of Central Florida
- Central Florida Speech & Hearing Center
- Champion for Children Foundation of Highlands County, Inc.
- Chapters Health, Good Shepherd Hospice
- Florida Epilepsy Services
- Heartland Horses Equine Activities & Learning, Inc.
- Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine
- Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision, Polk Division
- NU-HOPE Elder Care Services, Inc.
- Peace River Center for Personal Development, Inc.
- Ridge Area Arc
- Talbot House Ministries
- Tri-County Human Services
- Volunteers in Service to the Elderly (VISTE)



Scan the QR code with your phone to hear a Health success story.



Community Wellness

Through a grant with Polk County*, United Way of Central Florida has expanded its services this year. The grant from Polk County Indigent Health Care is two-fold, allowing UWCF to hire Community Wellness Navigators and fund services at local partner agencies.

Community Wellness Navigators provide information to individuals and families, spread awareness of the Polk HealthCare Plan and assist individuals with the application. These Navigators are unique in that they also advise individuals on other community programs they may be eligible for, providing wrap-around services.

Additionally, this grant allowed partnerships with agencies and organizations to provide services for **behavioral health and prevention/early intervention**, in an effort to reduce health care disparities to individuals and families in Polk County. 16 Community Wellness partner agencies received nearly \$5M in funding for services.

The 16 partner recipients were: Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County, Catholic Charities of Central Florida, Inc., Central Florida Speech and Hearing Center, Early Learning Coalition of Polk County, Florida Children's Museum, Heart for Winter Haven, Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine, North American Family Institute, One Hope United, Peace River Center, Polk for Recovery, Talbot House Ministries, Inc., The Children's Home Society of Florida, The Wilson House, Top Buttons, Tri-County Human Services,

*United Way of Central Florida's Community Wellness Navigators are a recipient of and partially funded by Polk County's voter-approved 1/2 cent sales tax for indigent health care.



COMMUNITY IMPACT TEAMS

The Community Impact Cabinet meets quarterly and is responsible for understanding local needs and driving lasting change for Central Florida. Additionally, volunteers serve on Community Investment Teams that meet each spring to determine UWCF funding allocations.

The allocation process is the cornerstone of UWCF. Annually, we entrust trained volunteers to carefully review funding requests from partners and make funding recommendations on how best to invest UWCF campaign dollars.

This year, 131 Community Investment volunteers participated on 15 teams. Volunteers evaluated 83 funded services at 47 partner agencies. Together, these volunteers spent more than 2,000 hours touring facilities, reviewing applications, audits, 990s and other documents.



COMMUNITY IMPACT CABINET

- Michael W. Tamney, Chair
- Kristin Aiken
- Roxann Bonta
- Dr. Naomi Boyer
- Senator Colleen Burton
- Jonathan Crain
- Lee Earls
- Don Elwell
- Heather Gordon
- Dr. Sandy Hightower
- Joy Johnson
- Erin Martinez
- Rusty Music
- Dell Quarry
- Benjamin Ruch
- Rod Crowley



Would you like to help with this process?
Scan the QR code to become a CIT volunteer.

DAY OF CARING:

Volunteering for Impact

This year over 350 volunteers set to work during the 30th Annual Day of Caring, to help with a variety of projects. Scheduled to take place during National Volunteer week, UWCF's annual Day of Caring events give local organizations a way to connect with nonprofits that need help in our community.



Thank you to our Day of Caring participants:

- Advent Health
- Alan Jay Automotive Network
- APHS Interact Club
- Bank of Central Florida
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Buttonwood Bay
- Central Contractors
- Central Florida Health Care
- Citizens Bank & Trust
- City of Sebring
- Compass Mortgage
- GEICO
- GiveWell Community Foundation
- Glades Electric Cooperative
- HCA Florida Highlands Hospital
- Heartland National Bank
- Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
- Highlands County Sheriff's Office
- Highlands County Supervisor of Elections
- Highlands County Tax Collector
- Lake Placid High School Interact Club
- Lykes Brothers
- Madden Branded Goods
- MidFlorida Credit Union
- Publix Super Markets, Inc.
- School Board of Highlands County
- Tiger Town Rotary
- United Way of Central Florida Women United, The Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center, Young Leaders Society and staff
- Wauchula State Bank
- Westlake



HURRICANE IAN RELIEF

In September of 2022 Hurricane Ian hit Florida as a category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 150mph, tying the record for the 5th strongest hurricane on record to strike the United States. The hurricane caused wide-spread flooding, leading to loss of life and damaged or destroyed property.

Anticipating a need for resources, United Way of Central Florida and GiveWell Community Foundation activated the United Community Relief Fund a day before the storm. This fund gave donors a place to contribute directly to relief efforts and allowed the organizations to fund recovery. 72 hours after the storm passed, it was clear that Hardee County was hit the worst of our three-county area. Team members attended daily Emergency Management meetings in Hardee County, attended meetings at the Polk Emergency Operations Center, stayed in regular contact with officials in Highlands County and monitored 211 to get information about the most critical needs.

UWCF helped coordinate over 5,000 food boxes, thousands of cases of water, infant formula, diapers, pet food, etc. and Freedom Tour and Publix trucks helped deliver the items to residents along the coast.



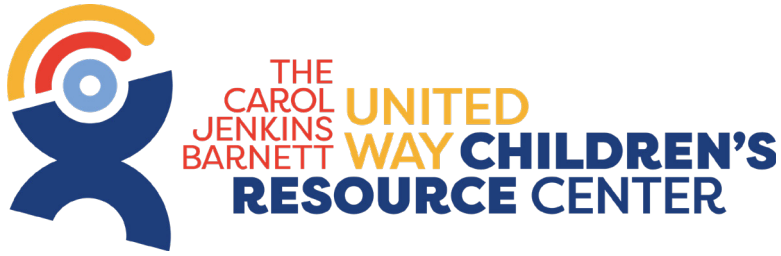
**THE UNITED COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND
RAISED MORE THAN**

\$260k

**THAT FUNDED FOOD, SHELTER, CLOTHING,
REPAIRS AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR
RESIDENTS AND PARTNER AGENCIES.**



*Scan the QR code with your phone to watch
our 2023 Impact video.*



The Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center has served more than 1,500 children during its weekly child development classes since reopening last year at Bonnet Springs Park.

Since moving from downtown Lakeland, the Children's Resource Center has administered over 25 developmental screenings and began hosting a monthly Autism Support Group. This spring the location also opened its doors for IRS-trained volunteers to prepare tax returns for 120 individuals at no cost.

Despite the name and location changes, the program remains a collaboration of organizations committed to strengthening families and our community by increasing access and awareness to resources and services.

The new location officially opened on November 4, 2022 with programs and classes starting on November 7. This location gives families ample free parking to utilize United Way services, with the beautiful park providing great opportunities for guests to enjoy outdoor spaces before or after class. Additionally, the new location has allowed the Children's Resource Center to offer sign language classes to infants and preschoolers, a breast-feeding support group and several other classes for a variety of ages and needs.

Besides the services provided at the Children's Resource Center, the Success By 6 Master Teachers program helped prepare 21 classrooms for success and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library sent books to over 1,700 children each month.

The goal at the Children's Resource Center is to provide support for children and families to help kids be successful in school and life. UWCF is incredibly grateful for the opportunities that this new location has and continues to provide the community.



*Scan the QR code to
watch our Success By 6
Update video.*





**Photo changed to protect likeness of child.*

SUCCESS STORY

Avery's parents moved to Lakeland last year and found out about The Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center through the LakelandMOM blog. Avery didn't have great success at other child development classes, but his dad, Alex, decided to give this one a try since it involves the caregiver in the class.

"The first day we attended class was horrible," he laughed, "Avery wanted to play with all the toys, not listen or sit for circle time. Flash forward to today, he's sitting for circle time, he's looking forward to singing the songs and participating. It's been a dramatic shift."

The class teacher, Amber Johnson, worked with Avery and Alex to give Avery space and let him warm up to the new environment. The variety of activities in the classroom gave Avery the opportunity to learn and follow along in his own way.

Alex shared, "Avery is a little autistic. He is classified as a level 1 on the Autism spectrum where it's not quite debilitating but does have some short-comings here and there." Amber introduced Alex to the Autism Support Group that meets monthly and brings in specialists from the community. The group has had a positive effect on their home life helping with topics such as picky eating to using music to help with clean up time.

Utilizing two of the resources available at the Children's Resource Center, Avery is well on his way to finding success in the classroom and beyond.

"What you guys are doing [at the Children's Resource Center] is awesome and I would love to see it grow." - Alex Diaz, parent



Scan the QR code to listen to Avery's story first-hand.



Scan the QR code to download the ReadingPal volunteer application.



This year the Children's Movement of Florida highlighted the ReadingPals program for its outstanding achievements! As one of the leading ReadingPals programs in Florida, our dedicated volunteers made a significant impact, supporting over 4,000 students since the program's inception. As one of the top 3 programs in the state, we're incredibly proud of our program and the growth that it has seen!

UWCF LEADERSHIP GIVERS

INVEST \$1,000+

ANNUALLY TO PROVIDE HOPE
AND CREATE POSITIVE LASTING
CHANGE IN POLK, HARDEE AND
HIGHLANDS COUNTIES.

LIVE UNITED

LEADERSHIP GIVING ASSOCIATION

In 2022-2023, Over 1,000 leadership donors invested over \$4.5M to support UWCF initiatives and community partners.

Leadership Givers are UWCF's most generous donors, giving hope to so many in the community through services that they are able to fund through the Community Investment process. Beyond donations, they often invest their time and advocacy, helping neighbors that need it the most. Throughout the year, Leadership Givers hosted 8 fundraising and service projects, bringing funding and awareness to a variety of initiatives.

Scan the QR code to visit our web page on
Leadership Giving Associations.



ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE & DÉMOCRATIE SOCIETIES

TOCQUEVILLE & DÉMOCRATIE DONORS INVESTED

\$2M+

TO SUPPORT UWCF INITIATIVES AND
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Alexis de Tocqueville and Démocratie Societies are groups of extraordinary community leaders and philanthropists who demonstrate their commitment to making Central Florida a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

In 2022-2023 Alexis de Tocqueville and Démocratie events included the Tocqueville Tuesday Planned Giving Lunch, where a panel of financial experts shared about estate planning and making wise financial investments. They also gathered in January at the home of Jeff and Marilyn Clyne to toast the new year and hear from our Board Chair, Ashley Bell Barnett.



ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE COMMITTEE

Wesley Barnett, Chair
Jacqueline Byrd
Jim Luffman

Nathan Adams
Greta Dupuy
Don Selvage

Dr. Glen Barden
Tip Fowler
Christina Criser Jackson

Barney Barnett
Eric Jackson
Stacy Walsh

WOMEN UNITED

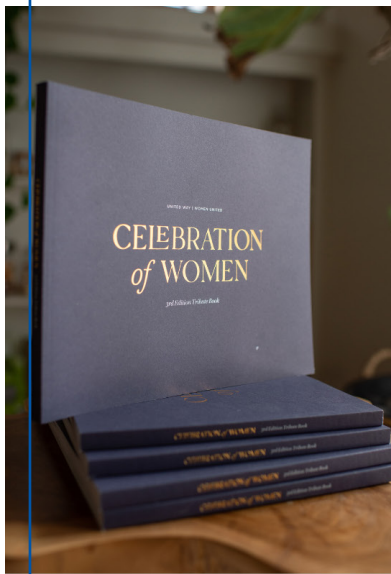
The purpose of Women United is to inspire, educate and encourage women to effect change in our community with a focus on women and children through philanthropy, volunteering, leadership and membership.

In 2022-2023 Women United produced the Celebration of Women book, raising over \$100k. The book was released at the Sunset Garden Party in November. Women United also participated in several service projects including book bundling for ReadingPals and their Party with a Purpose, writing encouraging notes to ReadingPals volunteers. In the spring they hosted a Night at the Ball Field, where long-time Women United member and volunteer, Nanette Rodgers, threw out the first pitch of the game.

THIS PAST YEAR WOMEN UNITED
RESURRECTED THE CELEBRATION OF
WOMEN TRIBUTE BOOK, RAISING OVER

\$100K

TO SUPPORT THE SUCCESS BY 6 INITIATIVE



COMMITTEE

Christine Ehlenbeck, Chair
Ashley Bailey
Ashley G. Barnett
Jeanette Crowley
Lauren Jensen
Erica Lupercio
Teresa Olinger
Emily Plank
Kimberly Rice
Brittany Sale
Katherine Fitzwater

YOUNG LEADERS SOCIETY

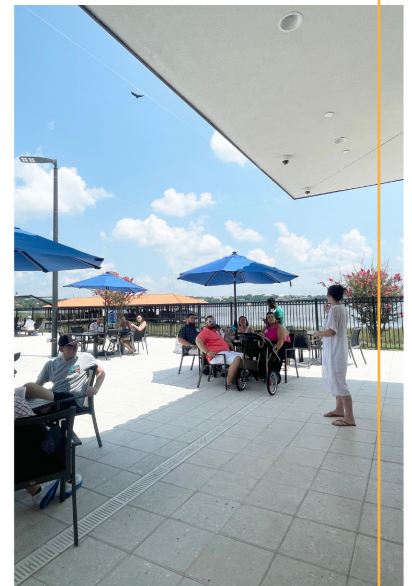
The mission of Young Leaders Society is to inspire young adults to build community and find their purpose through philanthropy, volunteering, leadership and mentorship with a focus on spreading awareness and raising funds to end hunger in our local community.

YLS HAD RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS
AT THEIR ANNUAL MIXOLOGY CLASS
FUNDRAISER, BRINGING IN OVER

\$32K

TO SUPPORT THE END HUNGER INITIATIVE

In 2022-2023 Young Leaders Society (YLS) participated in several service projects revolved around ending hunger in our community. Throughout the year, YLS helped out at food distribution sites, served meals at the Talbot House and organized the warehouse at One More Child. Young Leaders Society's signature events (the Apron's Holiday Party and the Mixology Class Fundraiser) brought awareness to UWCF along with record-breaking funds.



COMMITTEE

Erica Lupercio, Chair
Dr. Lauren Albaum
Tori Bateman
Rachel Cashdollar
Kelsey Elmhorst
Catherine Kirkland
Kate Wallace
Jes Garcia



2022-2023 SUPPORT

THIS YEAR'S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN BEGAN IN AUGUST 2022 WITH OUR ANNUAL PACESETTER CAMPAIGN AND OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN KICKOFF ON AUGUST 25.

United Way hosted the annual Campaign Kickoff event at LEGOLAND Florida Resort with Campaign Chair Representative Melony Bell and Resource Development Chair Nick Plott ringing in the start of the campaign. Board Chair Ashley Bell Barnett and President/CEO Christina Criser Jackson led the morning recognizing pacesetters and Top 50 contributors. They shared how *together, we can* make an impact for our local community.



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

- Representative Melony Bell, Campaign Chair
- Nick Plott, Chair
- Wesley Barnett
- Christine Ehlenbeck
- Erica Lupercio
- Sean Malott



Pacesetters

At the start of each race, pacesetters emerge to set the tone and pace. UWCF's campaign is no different with several companies and individuals leading by example, showing how committed they are to help UWCF improve lives and strengthen Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties. We are thankful for all of our partners that helped create a strong start to the 2022-2023 campaign!

THANK YOU TO THESE 2022 CAMPAIGN PACESETTERS:

- Achievement Academy, Inc.
- Alliance for Independence
- Bank of Central Florida
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County
- Representative Colleen Burton
- Central Florida Regional Planning Council
- Central Florida Speech & Hearing Center
- Champion for Children Foundation
- Church Service Center
- City of Auburndale
- Early Learning Coalition of Polk County
- EMERGE Lakeland
- Florida Children's Museum
- Firehouse Subs of Auburndale
- First Southern Bank
- Lu and John Fitzwater
- Frostproof Care Center
- Githens Insurance & Financial Services
- Hadley's Early Education Preschool, LLC
- Heartland National Bank
- Henkelman Construction
- Johnson Stivender Wealth Advisors
- Kindelan McDanal & Associates
- Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce
- Learning Resource Center of Polk County, Inc.
- Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision
- Peace River Center
- Polk Vision
- Ridge Area Arc
- Stuart's Plumbing
- Studio C Solutions
- Talbot House Ministries
- Nancy Tanner
- The Salvation Army Serving West Polk
- True North Farms
- United Way of Central Florida
- Valley Bank
- VISTE
- Wells Fargo
- YMCA of West Central Florida

Publix.

WHERE SHOPPING IS A PLEASURE®

Congratulations to Publix Super Markets, Inc. and Publix Charities, the **#1 Global Corporate Leader** for the fourth year in a row! That means that Publix Super Markets, Inc. and its associates are the largest donor to United Way Worldwide. It's no secret that Publix associates give back to their community. We are honored to support their corporate office and lead the charge on distributing campaign resources across seven states.



In addition to their philanthropic support, Publix invested in United Way of Florida, with Publix CEO Todd Jones speaking at the United Way of Florida Conference. Suzette Jones joined the United Way of Florida Board.





ANNUAL CELEBRATION

UWCF HELD ITS ANNUAL MEETING AT THE POLK STATE COLLEGE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY ON THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2023. NEARLY 300 COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE FOR THE EVENT CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY AND RECOGNIZING OUR ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS. BOARD CHAIR ASHLEY BELL BARNETT PRESIDED OVER THE MEETING WITH HELP FROM MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS:

Bank of Central Florida
Central Florida Health Care
Citizens Bank & Trust
CPS Investment Advisors and CPS Group, CPAs
Early Learning Coalition of Polk County
George Jenkins Foundation
GiveWell Community Foundation
Publix Super Markets Charities
Polk County



GEORGE W. JENKINS OUTSTANDING UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER

Candidates for this award are nominated by the past recipients and the Board of Directors. The winner is selected by the past five recipients. Nominees are considered for their United Way involvement, volunteer experience and overall leadership roles.



Lyle Bowlin (left) has been serving at United Way of Central Florida since 2016. While serving as Treasurer, Bowlin was instrumental in navigating the UWCF finance committee and the United Way through the COVID-19 pandemic. He also helped revise the Investment Policy Statement to ensure that UWCF has strong policies in place for the management of the donations given to our community.

ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

Candidates for this award are considered by their long-term and continuous service to United Way, their involvement in other civic and nonprofit organizations and how they inspire others to LIVE UNITED.



Tammi & Brian Haas (left) have dedicated their lives to the citizens of Central Florida. Brian has served on our Board of Directors since 2017 and has been a member of our Governance Committee, as well as Board Secretary. He continues to partner with United Way, innovating how workplaces and nonprofits can work together.



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes a volunteer for their involvement, experience, and leadership.

Barney Barnett (not pictured) never ceases to go above and beyond for his beloved community. He provided relief to a large population of residents devastated by Hurricane Ian. This past year his support allowed us to open the new Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center. Barnett is a past United Way Board Member and continues to serve as a member of the Alexis de Tocqueville Society. His sons, Wesley and Nicholas Barnett were present to accept his award.



DIFFERENCE MAKER

The Difference Maker Award was inspired by past employee Kayla Harris and comes from an Elie Wiesel Quote. "One person of integrity can make a difference."

Ashley Tinker (middle) is a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters Suncoast where she won Big Sister of the Year. As a small business owner, she often goes above and beyond to help those around her. She serves her community through her time, facilitating charity events and mentoring other entrepreneurs inspiring those around her to be their best self.



SPIRIT OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

The Spirit of Central Florida Award acknowledges an organization that has surpassed all expectations and exemplifies the giving spirit in Central Florida.

Thrive (formerly DSM) demonstrates the meaning of LIVE UNITED every day. They have participated in a UWCF workplace campaign for over two decades, raising over \$664,081 in lifetime giving to United Way. They encourage leadership giving by inspiring others to follow their lead and spirit of giving with matching programs.

WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN AWARDS

United Way recognizes organizations annually who participate in outstanding workplace campaigns through Summit Awards. Organizations are grouped into categories based on number of employees and evaluated based on participation, per capita giving and percent increases in giving from the previous year.



SMALL BUSINESS

STUART'S PLUMBING



MEDIUM BUSINESS

WESTLAKE



LARGE BUSINESS

POLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

EMPLOYEE COORDINATOR AWARDS

Employee Coordinators serve as ambassadors for United Way in their workplace. The Employee Coordinator awards recognize individuals who lead their organization in holding an exemplary campaign with increases in participation and per capita giving.



EMPLOYEE COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR

BERNICE GUALTIERI,
CITIZEN'S BANK & TRUST



SMALL BUSINESS
ANDY MCENTIRE & TJ ZIMMERMANS
CONCORD COFFEE



MEDIUM BUSINESS
THOMAS RANGE
FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE



LARGE BUSINESS
OLGA CALLE-IRIZARRY
COCA-COLA



PARTNER AGENCY
ANGIE PATTISON
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

CAROL JENKINS BARNETT SUCCESS BY 6 CHILD ADVOCACY AWARD



NEW BUSINESS

SUN 'N FUN

CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$10,657,115

CAMPAIGN TOTAL:
\$13,462,661!

Twenty years ago Carol Jenkins Barnett created an award recognizing child advocacy. This award was given to a well-deserving woman doing incredible work in our community. With the 20th anniversary of the award approaching, the first recipient of the award, Nanette Rodgers, contacted United Way to give reprise to the award and recognize an advocacy leader in our community.



Penny Borgia with presenters
Ashley Barnett & Nanette Rodgers

Penny Borgia is past Chief Operating Officer, Director of Success By 6 and Vice President of Community Impact for UWCF. She has been on the Board of Directors for READ Polk and Achievement Academy as well as a member of Leadership Polk, Polk Vision, and the Volunteer Resource Center. A volunteer with the ReadingPals program and member of the United Way Education Steering Team, her passion for children and education is evident through her life's work and the impact that she has made throughout our community.



AMBASSADORS

United Way Ambassadors act as consultants, relationship builders and resource development professionals who inform and share the United Way message with our community. Thank you to our 2022-2023 United Way Ambassadors (as pictured) **Katia Schwinghammer, Frankie Vosburg, Makenna Hansel, Sofia Yeako and Marcus Wright Jr.**



HIGHLANDS COUNTY

United Way of Central Florida has served the Highlands County community for over 30 years by understanding local needs and contracting with qualified partners. What’s special about Highlands County is that all the money raised in Highlands County, stays in Highlands County. Donations made in the county stay local to help the Highlands County residents that need it most.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD

- Don E. Elwell, Chair**
Alan Jay Automotive Network
- Sheriff Paul Blackman**
Highlands County Sheriff’s Office
- Jessica Carlson**
Carlson Co.
- Melisa Crews**
Heartland National Bank
- Ingra Gardner**
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
- Joseph Gleason**
HCA Florida Highlands Hospital
- Alison Hancock**
SouthState Bank
- Dusty Johnson**
Johnson Stivender Wealth Advisors, Inc.
- Jennifer Koukos**
Glades Electric Cooperative
- Superintendent Dr. Brenda Longshore**
School Board of Highlands County

- Trevor Murphy**
Murphy Ag Solutions
- Scott Noethlich**
City of Sebring
- Brian Norris**
Taylor Oil Co.
- Ranjan Patel**
Dr. C.B. and Ranjan Patel Foundation
- Garrett Roberts**
Highlands County Sheriff’s Office
- Blake Steedley**
Allen & Company of FL, Inc.
- Paul Von Merveldt Jr.**
South Oak Church
- Chad Warrick**
Syngenta
- Karla Youlden**
Publix Super Markets, Inc.



HIGHLANDS COUNTY END HUNGER
INITIATIVE SERVED MORE THAN

39k

VISITORS AT THEIR HEALTHY FOOD PANTRIES
FROM MARCH 2022 - FEBRUARY 2023.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY ANNUAL CELEBRATION AWARDS

United Way of Central Florida honored community members at its Highlands County Annual Celebration, awarding Employee Coordinator of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Citizen of the Year and more. Speakers included Difference Maker of the Year Ashley Tinker and President and CEO Christina Criser Jackson. The event was held at the Sebring Civic Center.



**EMPLOYEE COORDINATOR
OF THE YEAR**

GLORIA RYBINSKI



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

DUSTY JOHNSON



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

DON ELWELL



Scan the QR code to view our
Annual Celebration recap.

HIGHLANDS HIGHLIGHTS

Pictured from top left, clock-wise: Christina Criser Jackson and GiveWell CEO Callie Neslund present on the United Community Needs Assessment to the Highlands County Advisory Board; Client at our Partner Agency, Ridge Area Arc, receives his certificate for the 1000 Steps Club; Thank you card from Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County; CIT teams visit Heartland Horses and STEAM Preschool Academy; Ridge Area Arc client receives Adult Day Training.



Strategic Plan

The United Way of Central Florida Board of Directors reevaluates our objectives every three years. With extensive guidance from the Board, staff turn the goals into an action plan with specific benchmarks and completion dates. With the last strategic plan completed in June 2023, a new strategic plan was made for 2023-2026. These are the overall objectives that we intend to reach within the next three years:



1 Better Serve Our Community

With the completion of the United Community Needs Assessment, UWCF has an increased understanding of the challenges that effect our community. Internal programs will strive to increase kindergarten readiness and academic achievement, as well as spread community education of funded services. Additionally, they will assess and revise programs, strengthening community partnerships through volunteerism.

2 Strengthen Our Base

UWCF's team of professional fundraisers and community advocates are committed to finding new and engaging ways to empower local businesses, foundations and individuals to better connect with and serve the community they live and work in. UWCF strives to be a leader in employee satisfaction and new efforts will help maintain a world class staff.

3 Communicate Our Brand

By utilizing our most invested volunteers, UWCF's strategies for making positive lasting change in communities are being shared in places previously unavailable. New technologies will increase the efficiency of the volunteer and donor experience.

Our full Strategic Plan includes 7 Target Areas; Community Impact, Growth and Sustainability, Brand Awareness, Technology, Operational Viability and Internal Programs and Initiatives. These target areas include action items with deadlines and assigned staff. This page serves as a summary of the plan.



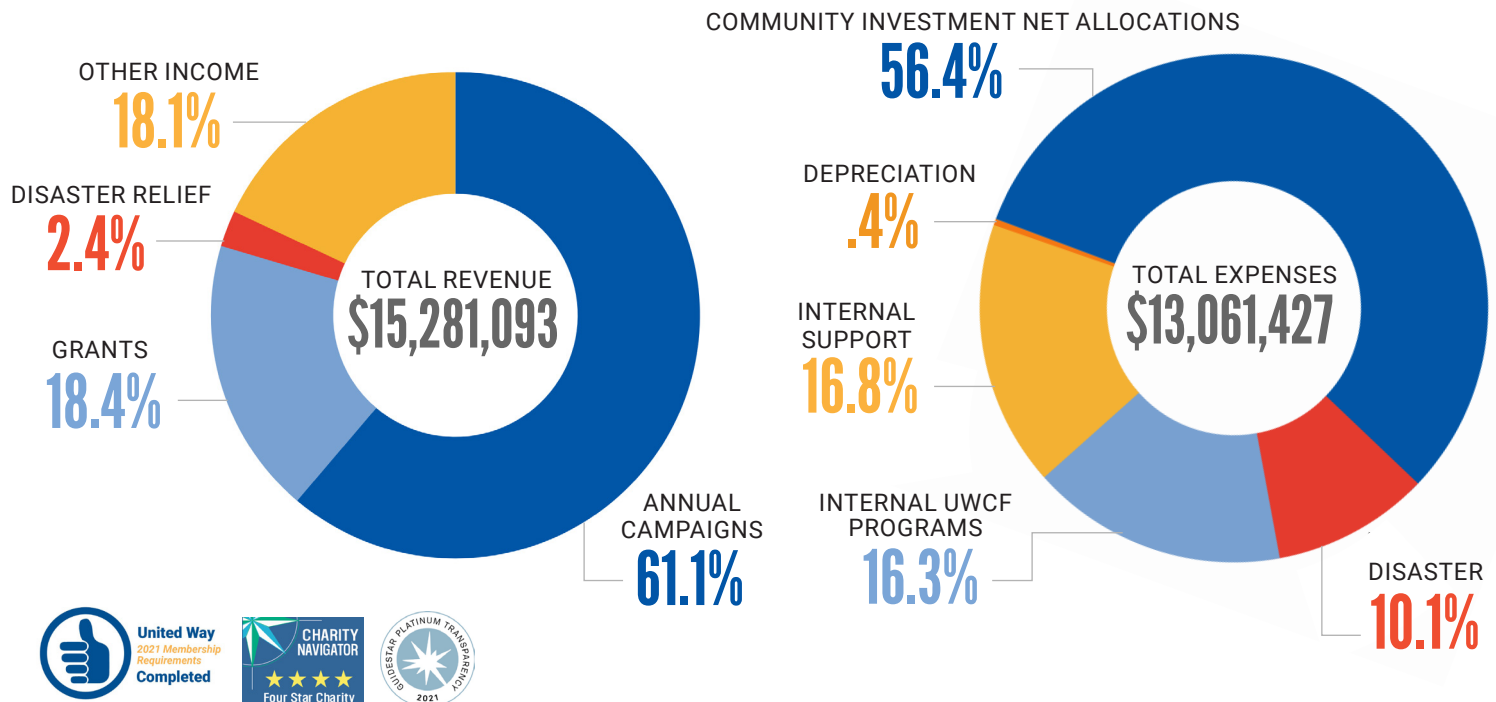
FINANCIAL UPDATE

Through the Board of Directors and volunteer committees, we draw upon the financial and management expertise in our community to maintain a fiscal record of clean audits for 26 years.



Chief Financial Officer, Jill Martin

Lakeland native Jill Martin has served as UWCF's CFO since 1997. Jill has led United Way of Central Florida through 26 years of clean audits and leads an incredible finance team. This is her last full year as CFO as she plans to retire January 2024. We are incredibly grateful for Jill's leadership and dedication to United Way for the last twenty-six years.



* UWCF undergoes an annual financial statement audit by an independent CPA firm. Financials are from the audited Statement of Activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. For a copy of our full Financial Statement and Form 990, please visit uwcf.org.

2022 TOP SUPPORTERS



The George Jenkins
— Foundation —



CENTURY RESIDENTIAL, LLC



Early Learning Coalition of Polk County
 Tampa Electric Company
 SouthState Bank
 United Way of Central Florida
 South Florida State College
 Truist
 Mid-State Industrial Maintenance
 Six/Ten, LLC
 BUL-HED Corporation
 AgAmerica Lending
 C&S Wholesale Grocers
 Hudson Pump & Equipment
 Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
 Polk County Tax Collector
 Boring Business Systems
 Keller Williams Realty
 Wells Fargo
 Central Florida Regional Planning Council
 Heartland National Bank
 Polk State College
 Target
 The Lunz Group
 YMCA of West Central Florida
 The Ruthvens
 Dr. C.B. and Ranjan Patel Foundation



Food Distribution Site



Hurricane Ian Relief



The Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center



Agency Partner: Ridge Area Arc



STAFF

UWCF'S STAFF IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THEIR CENTRAL FLORIDA NEIGHBORS EVERY DAY. THEY EMBODY OUR TAGLINE 'LIVE UNITED' THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, NETWORKING, VOLUNTEERISM AND STRIVING TO CREATE LASTING COMMUNITY CHANGE.



Staff Trainings & Conferences

Gretchen Ceranic, Rod Crowley, Jes Garcia, John Hardesty, Katherine Fitzwater and Christina Criser Jackson completed Emily Rogers Legacy Leadership Training. All staff members completed the Nyrka Riskin *Your Unique Elevator Pitch* Training.

Christina Criser Jackson completed Leadership Polk and participated on the United Way of Florida Conference Committee.

Andrea Oliver-Clarke emceed the AFP Planet Philanthropy Conference.

Various staff members attended the Bright Ideas Workshop.

Jes Garcia completed Personal Branding Coaching and Executive Career Coaching with Nyrka Riskin.

Jordan Weiland served on the Marketing subcommittee for the United Way of Florida Conference.

Various staff members participated in Emily Rogers Training, AFP Planet Philanthropy Conference, the United Way of Florida Conference and the United Way Southeast Region Conference.

Rod Crowley attended the United Way Worldwide Conference.

Christina Criser Jackson, Jordan Weiland and Marcus Wright Jr. attended United Way of Florida Capitol Days.

Staff Accomplishments

Carolyn Burnett led ReadingPals to one of the top programs in the state prompting the Children's Movement to feature our program.

Christina Criser Jackson was named 40 Under 40 Tampa Bay Business Journal and 40 Under 40 University of Florida and completed Leadership Polk.

Scott Lonsberry retired after over 22 years of service to United Way of Central Florida.

Jessica Pease completed the LEDC's Summer Leadership Program.

Andrea Oliver-Clarke facilitated two community forums: Smart Growth and Race & Equity.

Community Board/Committee Service

- **Christy Apisa:** Youth Leadership Polk, Crystal Lake Elementary a Community Partnership School Communications Committee, Hardee Emergency Food & Shelter Local Board, Polk Vision Behavioral Health Committee, Engaging High-Risk Communities Subcommittee
- **Carolyn Burnett:** Literacy Committee for Polk Vision, Managers of Volunteers of Polk
- **Gretchen Ceranic:** Polk Vision Literacy Team, Safe Kids Polk, Coalition on Injury Protection
- **Christina Criser Jackson:** AFP Florida Caucus Past President, GiveWell Community Foundation Board, Polk Vision Governance Board, United Way of Florida State Conference Committee
- **Rod Crowley:** PCPS Efficiency Review Committee, Community Partnership School Executive Cabinet, Polk County Sheriff's Advisory Council and co-chair of the Polk Vision's Food Security Council.
- **Katherine Fitzwater:** Junior League of Greater Lakeland, Lakeland Vision, Leadership Lakeland Alumni Association and LkldNow
- **Jes Garcia:** AFP Polk Board Idea Chair, Latin Leaders
- **Chris Hafer:** Treasurer at Peace Creek Baptist
- **Liz Lind:** Beauty Fit for a Queen
- **Jessica Pease:** Crystal Lake Elementary, A Community

Partnership School Operations Team, Polk Vision's Food Security Council Steering Committee.

- **Marcus Wright Jr.:** Public Education Partnership of Winter Haven Cypress Junction Montessori, Polk County Voter's League, NAACP

Staff List

- **Christy Apisa**, Community Impact Manager
- **Pam Armstrong**, Master Teacher
- **Carolyn Burnett**, ReadingPals Program Manager
- **Gretchen Ceranic**, Director of Success By 6
- **Christina Criser Jackson**, President & CEO
- **Ashley Clark**, Master Teacher
- **Rod Crowley**, Chief Operating Officer
- **Lori Dawson**, Community Wellness Quality Assurance Auditor
- **Lance Ferguson**, Communications Coordinator
- **Katherine Fitzwater**, Vice President of Marketing & Communications
- **Jes Garcia**, Director of Executive Operations
- **Chris Hafer**, Staff Accountant
- **John Hardesty**, Director of Finance
- **Makenna Hansel**, Success By 6 Coordinator
- **Beth Hill**, Senior Director of Workplace Campaigns
- **Monica Holley-Workman**, Visitation Coordinator
- **Amber Johnson**, Early Childhood Education Manager
- **Sydney Lawhorn**, Resource Development Coordinator
- **Liz Lind**, Highlands County Coordinator
- **Jill Martin**, Chief Financial Officer
- **June May**, Director of Community Resources
- **Brandy Mister**, Accounting Associate
- **Mandi Mitchell**, Human Resources Coordinator
- **Andrea Oliver-Clarke**, Manager of Philanthropy
- **Jessica Pease**, Community Impact Manager
- **Cheryl Pierstoff**, Accounting Associate
- **Amber Qureshi**, Success By 6 Program Manager
- **Xochitl Rodarte**, Accounting Associate
- **Ann Marie Russell**, Lead Community Wellness Navigator
- **Dale Stills**, Senior Director of Resource Development
- **Peyton Wallace**, Receptionist
- **Jordan Weiland**, Marketing Content Strategist
- **Marcus Wright Jr.**, Resource Development Manager
- **Beth Yale**, Community Impact Assistant



United Way of Central Florida

PO Box 1357
Highland City, FL 33812
863.648.1500

JOIN US IN GIVING BACK TO POLK,
HARDEE AND HIGHLANDS COUNTIES BY
THE END OF THE YEAR!

VISIT [UWCF.ORG/GIVE](https://uwcf.org/give) OR SCAN THE
QR CODE TO SUPPORT OUR VISION TO
UNITE OUR COMMUNITY AND EMPOWER
EVERYONE TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL
POTENTIAL.



THANK YOU TO OUR MISSION PARTNERS:



The George Jenkins
Foundation

