



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## United Way of Southwest Louisiana announces \$2.94 million for Grant Awards

United Way of Southwest Louisiana announces \$2.94 million in total awards for an array of community initiatives for the upcoming 2014-2015 funding cycle.

Nearly 75 volunteers participated in the annual citizens review process evaluating proposals submitted by local agencies who were seeking funding through United Way. Upon completion, the Community Investment volunteers submitted their recommendation to the United Way Board of Directors for final consideration.

The United Way of Southwest Louisiana Board of Directors is pleased to announce the 2014-2015 Grant Award recipients: 2\*1\*1, Abrahams Tent, American Red Cross, BeauCARE, Beauregard ARC, Beauregard Community Concerns, Beauregard Council on Aging, Big Brother Big Sister, Boy Scouts-Louisiana Purchase, Boys Village, Calcasieu Community Clinic, Calcasieu Council on Aging, Cameron Council on Aging, CARC, Community Chest, Children's Museum, Family & Youth Counseling, Foreman-Reynaud, Girl Scouts, Jeff Davis CADA, Jeff Davis Council on Aging, Junior Achievement, Literacy Council of SWLA, Merryville Community Health, NAMI, Oasis, Project Build a Future, Second Harvest, St. Nicholas Center for Children, Salvation Army, SWLA Law Center. In addition, Special Olympics and the Parkinson's Association will be funded as United Way Community Partners.

New to this year's recipients is the St. Nicholas Center for Children and Project Build A Future. Denise Durel, President/CEO of United Way of Southwest Louisiana stated, "We are honored to welcome the St. Nicholas Center for Children and Project Build A Future to our United Way family. The addition of these new partners strengthens our work and the collective impact that we are having in our community."

St. Nicholas Center helps bring the opportunity for early intervention to countless families, who otherwise would not have the chance to offer ABA therapy to their child. United Way of Southwest Louisiana is pleased to help fund the Be A Star In Class (BASIC) Training program through

St. Nicholas Center for Children that provides: ABA, physical, occupational and speech therapies to four- and five-year-old children with autism in a clinical classroom and individual setting to achieve school readiness.

Project Build a Future's (PBAF) goal is to stabilize the low-income community we serve by providing financial education that leads to opportunity and growth for the families we serve. United Way of Southwest Louisiana is honored to assist in funding the Homebuyer Counseling and Education Program and Matched Savings Program through Project Build a Future. These programs will provide one-on-one and group counseling sessions to help people rebuild credit by paying down debt, establishing new, positive credit lines, develop manageable budgets and motivate clients to save to help them accomplish their goal of homeownership.

For the past 24 years, United Way of Southwest Louisiana has continued to fund The Volunteer Center's information and referral service. Anyone within the five parish-wide area of Southwest Louisiana can dial 211 from a landline or a cell phone and receive information regarding assistance that may be available. This year, in addition to the annual allocated financial support of the 211 program, United Way is also providing funding to integrate our local service with the other 211 providers in the state. United Way recognizes the need for a local 211 service provider to be part of a unified statewide system with other providers in times of emergency or disaster.

In addition, United Way of Southwest Louisiana is focused on several Collective Impact Initiatives. This year they include: *Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)* -Program that assists low to moderate income tax payers by providing free tax prep by IRS certified volunteers. *Disaster Preparedness*- United Way is a member of the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) and participates in evacuation drills so that we are prepared in case of emergency. *Volunteer Mobilization*- A resource that matches donors, advocates and volunteers with opportunities to help people in need. *United Against Child Hunger*- Which provides weekend food supplies for at risk children. *Cribs for Kids*- A program providing tools and the education necessary for the safe sleeping practices for infants. *The Imagination Library*- A resource that provides children ages 0-5 with an age appropriate book every month to encourage reading and enable them to have their very own home library.

Durel added "United Way provides the collaboration, resources and support necessary to strengthen our community by focusing on the common good. It's important that we remain focused on the needs within our community so we have the ability to address them."

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