



# NEWS

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Heart of Florida United Way

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **UNITED WAY ANNOUNCES GRANT AWARDS FOR TWO INVESTMENT AREAS – BUILDING SAFE COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVING FINANCIAL STABILITY**

ORLANDO, Fla. (Oct. 8, 2009) – Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) today announced the first round of funding awards under the organization’s new grant-making model, *Investing in Results*. Eleven programs will receive \$1.3 million for programs that support two of the organization’s new focus areas - *Building Safe Communities* and *Improving Financial Stability*. When combined with more than \$8 million in grants, which were awarded earlier this year to nearly 100 local programs, United Way has awarded nearly \$9.3 million this year.

### **Programs funded under *Building Safe Communities* and the agency that administers them include:**

- **A.C.C.E.S.S. (All Children Can Excel, Shine, and Succeed)** – After School Programs, Inc.
- **Delinquency Prevention Initiative** – Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida, Inc. (Osceola Branch)
- **New Horizons** – The Center for Drug-Free Living, Inc.
- **Children in Need of Services and Families in Need of Services** – Children’s Home Society of Florida, Central Florida Division
- **Parent Neighborhood Watch Program** – Federation of Congregations United to Serve, Inc. (FOCUS)

### **Programs funded under *Improving Financial Stability* and the agency that administers them include:**

- **Parenting Skills-Building Classes** - BETA Center, Inc.
- **Pathways to Home** - Community Based Care of Seminole, Inc.
- **Partners for Financial Stability** - Consumer Credit Counseling Service
- **Financial Literacy for Girls** - Girl Scouts of Citrus Council, Inc.
- **Family Stabilization** - Jewish Family Services of Greater Orlando
- **Osceola Financial Pathways** - Osceola Council on Aging, Inc.

“With this funding, our organization will expand programs and services and help people in targeted economically challenged areas,” said Rick Skaggs, president of grant recipient Consumer Credit Counseling Service. “We will provide counseling and services related to budget, money management, credit and housing – financial areas that

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are putting a strain on the well-being of families. We're excited about our growing role as a United Way and community partner."

### **The Process**

The 11 programs chosen to receive grants were selected on their ability to create measurable, community-level change, in two of HFUW's new focus areas: ***Building Safe Communities*** and ***Improving Financial Stability***. Nearly two dozen local issue experts serving on volunteer cabinets spent more than 600 hours researching and reviewing 83 applications submitted by local agencies – 2,000 of which were initially invited to participate in the process.

The ***Building Safe Communities*** Cabinet was tasked with finding evidence-based solutions for reducing crime – especially youth crime – and reviewed programs that address such things as school achievement, high-school graduation rates, youth mentoring, after-school programs and other factors that influence teens' success.

"This approach is a departure from the way many human service organizations have historically operated, but it represents an investment in results that will serve local individuals and families well," said Dr. Laurie Joyner, Dean of Faculty for Rollins College, and chair of the ***Building Safe Communities*** Cabinet.

The ***Improving Financial Stability*** Cabinet focused on addressing new solutions for growing poverty in Central Florida and improving low income resident's access to financial resources. Mark A. Jones, President of Dr. P. Phillips Hospital and Chair of the ***Improving Financial Stability*** Cabinet, explained new solutions are critically needed to help families improve their financial strength and resources.

"Now more than ever, it's important to help people build a solid future by offering financial education and tools for building assets and employment," Jones said. "In addition to providing emergency assistance after job loss, foreclosure or other crises, these programs will help people develop the financial knowledge, support and resources they need to prevent problems from happening in the first place."

### **Moving Forward**

*Investing in Results* will roll out over the next five years until virtually all United Way partner agency programs are funded through a competitive grant process. ***Building Safe Communities*** and ***Improving Financial Stability*** were the first two focus areas to begin moving in this direction.

United Way's two other areas of focus are ***Developing Healthy Children and Families*** and ***Alleviating Hunger and Homelessness***. Depending on available funding, which will be determined in part by the organization's current fundraising campaign, the application process for ***Developing Healthy Children and Families*** will likely

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occur in mid 2010. To address ***Alleviating Hunger and Homelessness***, the organization is partnering with the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, which is already working on a 10-year plan to end homelessness. By providing administrative, fundraising, marketing and other support to the Commission, United Way has established a model for other partnerships that will evolve as *Investing in Results* unfolds.

*“Investing in Results* is about focusing,” said Ed Timberlake, chair of the *Investing in Results* Council and Chairman of the Central Florida Board for Seaside National Bank & Trust. The Council, comprised of civic leaders, academics, issue experts and others, has been working for the past three years to guide United Way’s transition to the new prevention-based, grant-making model.

“It’s difficult to change community conditions when you’re spread a mile wide and an inch deep,” Timberlake said. “That’s why we’re focusing resources and attention in these investment areas, which were identified by a broad cross-section of our community through rigorous research.”

The new model also enables United Way to attract and leverage additional resources such as local, state and national grants and funds, which the community hasn’t been positioned to pursue in the past. “Ultimately, *Investing in Results* allows United Way to develop new resources and a portfolio of prevention-based programs that, collectively, can move the needle on some of our region’s greatest problems,” Timberlake said.

For more information about Heart of Florida United Way or *Investing in Results*, visit [www.hfuw.org](http://www.hfuw.org) or call 407-835-0900.

#### **About Heart of Florida United Way**

Heart of Florida United Way is Central Florida’s most comprehensive health and human services charity and the largest provider of funds to the region’s most critical health and human service programs. The organization partners with local businesses, government, other charities and individuals to increase awareness of local health and human service issues and to inspire hope, provide options, and create possibilities for the people in our community. HFUW also operates United Way 2-1-1, Central Florida’s community information and referral helpline; a Volunteer Resource Center; a Gifts In Kind Center; a Stewardship program that works with agencies to provide emergency assistance; and the Ryan White Part B program, which administers nearly \$2 million to much needed HIV/AIDS services and referrals. The organization impacts more people annually than any other charity operating in the tri-county area. For more information, visit [www.hfuw.org](http://www.hfuw.org).

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**Heart of Florida United Way  
Investing in Results  
Program Descriptions**

**Building Safe Communities**

Throughout the process of determining funding decisions, HFUW emphasized that programs be based on best practices – practices that research indicates are the most effective in addressing prevention of *youth crime* and *building safe neighborhoods*.

- **Federation of Congregations United to Serve, Inc. (FOCUS)**

- **Program: Parent Neighborhood Watch Program**

- This program provides leadership training to parents in five (5) Oak Ridge area schools. These parent leaders work to improve schools and the surrounding community by increasing parent engagement, community collaboration, and opportunities for youth. This will be accomplished by building school capacity, building successful community coalitions and empowering community residents.

- **Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida, Inc. (Osceola Branch)**

- **Program: Delinquency Prevention Initiative**

- This program addresses an increased outreach to the most at-risk youth by providing them with enhanced services including extended hours at night and on weekends, more interaction and mentoring between staff and youth, and enhanced curriculum. Using expanded hours, enhanced teen-specific programming, transportation, increased staff interaction and working with local partners, the program will result in development of a cohesive support system of protective factors to help teens resist negative influences in their lives.

- **Children's Home Society of Florida – Central Florida Division**

- **Program: Children in Need of Services / Families in Need of Services**

- This program addresses the problems of children and families by providing them with an array of services designed to preserve the unity and integrity of the family and to prevent delinquent behavior and dependency system involvement. This will be accomplished through treating conduct disorders, family therapy and parent training, clarifying and communicating norms about behavior, and social competency skills.

- **After School Programs, Inc.**

- **Program: A.C.C.E.S.S. (All Children Can Excel, Shine and Succeed)**

- This program provides a safe, affordable educational after school and summer program for children in schools from economically distressed neighborhoods; particularly the primary grades at Lake Weston Elementary School where 95 percent of students receive free and/or reduced lunch. The organization is SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accredited, which is the highest level of accreditation achievable in this service area.

- **The Center for Drug-Free Living, Inc.**

- **Program: New Horizons**

- This is a middle and high school-based prevention program that helps to diminish and correct the antisocial behaviors that have become the “norm” for many students. New Horizons gives students the skills and positive feedback they require to become productive members of their school and community. This program is embedded in the schools and has a proven track record of outcome success.

### **Improving Financial Stability**

Throughout the process of determining funding decision, HFUW emphasized that programs be based on best practices – practices that research indicates are the most effective in addressing *financial literacy, sustainable employment, income supports, and generating and maintaining savings and assets.*

- **Consumer Credit Counseling Service**  
**Program: Partners for Financial Stability**  
This is a custom designed program that provides insight into the concepts of money and credit management. Tailored to meet individual client needs, consumers learn about goal setting, cash flow management, savings, credit and credit scores, predatory lending, identity theft and other related topics.
- **Osceola Council on Aging, Inc.**  
**Program: Osceola Financial Pathways**  
This is a community-based initiative for families facing economic insecurity. The program's goal is to address the economic self-sufficiency of disadvantaged families by providing supportive services, financial education and asset building tools to help them move out of poverty.
- **Community Based Care of Seminole, Inc.**  
**Program: Pathways to Home**  
This program is a collaborative effort of 40-plus Seminole County providers, including government, community organizations and faith-based resources that provide a comprehensive and interwoven sequence of services to increase the financial stability of economically disadvantaged Seminole County residents.
- **Jewish Family Services of Greater Orlando**  
**Program: Family Stabilization**  
This program prevents the spread of homelessness by providing solutions for families by redefining emergency services from a reactive to a strengths-based preventative model. Through the use of direct distribution of dollars, financial education, support, and counseling families stabilize their crisis and create self-sufficiency to avoid homelessness.
- **Girl Scouts of Citrus Council, Inc.**  
**Program: Financial Literacy for Girls**  
This program offers a multi-pronged approach to reach girls, adult volunteers and parents for sound financial experiences and education through a combination of the annual cookie sales supported by a new web-based curriculum.
- **BETA Center, Inc.**  
**Program: Parenting Skills-Building Classes**  
This program is an eight-week, specialized curriculum focused on helping high risk, low-income individuals and families increase their financial literacy/management skills and deliver it directly in community sites.