Heart of Florida United Way’s 13th Annual Women United Luncheon Draws Hundreds of Local Female Leaders in Support of ALICE Families

Keynote Speaker Bonnie St. John Addresses Attendees

ORLANDO, Fla. (March 11, 2020) – Heart of Florida United Way’s 13th annual Women United Luncheon drew nearly 600 local female leaders who are determined to make a difference in their communities.

Women United, comprised of a global network of female leaders with more than 70,000 members, focuses on combating the most critical issues facing more than 165 communities in six countries. Locally, Women United fights to empower women and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families throughout Central Florida. ALICE often works multiple jobs but struggle to cover their basic needs and are one emergency away from financial ruin.

The luncheon’s keynote speaker, Bonnie St. John, broke barriers when she became the first African American ever to win medals in the Winter Paralympic Olympic competition. Identifying first-hand with ALICE as a young girl, Bonnie provided a unique perspective to overcoming life’s obstacles. The Harvard graduate and best-selling author motivated the audience with her story of triumph and attendees left the event inspired and determined to pay it forward.

In 2019 alone, Women United helped to support more than 278,000 women and girls who are ALICE through education, financial stability, and basic needs assistance. The luncheon successfully raised over $150,000 in support of ALICE families.

“Each time I encounter a room full of women this passionate about their community, I am inspired,” said Tracey Powell, Vice President, Pricing & Revenue Management – Disney Signature Experiences and Women United Luncheon Co-Chair. “I am proud to be a part of Women United, serving alongside local women who are standing and fighting every day for ALICE,” she continued.

During the luncheon, a unique opportunity to assist new parents and expectant mothers was provided. In addition to assisting ALICE through education, health, and basic needs, attendees contributed to purchasing Basics for Baby bins. The bins are complete with items every parent needs to ensure the success of welcoming a new baby. Through these donations, ALICE families are one-step closer to alleviating some of the financial burdens that can arise when welcoming a little bundle of joy. For anyone not in attendance, but wants to contribute, visit www.HFUW.org/CommunityBabyShower.

“One of the things I enjoy most about Women United is that we focus on serving the holistic needs of ALICE,” said Anne-Marie Hayward, Coached by Design & Women United Luncheon Co-Chair. “The Women United Luncheon serves as a reminder and testament to what we can accomplish in this community,” she continued.

Women United is a trusted place for women to come together to find their voice and take a stand for issues that matter to them in their communities. “Women United has been a leading force of change throughout
Central Florida," said Kari Conley, Duke Energy & Women United Co-Chair. “Each year our impact grows and we have no intention of slowing down,” she continued.

This year's luncheon was presented by Orlando Health. Additional leading sponsors included Tupperware Brands Corporation, Publix Super Markets Charities and Disney.

For more information about Women United, visit www.hfuw.org/WomenUnited or email WomenUnited@hfuw.org.

About Heart of Florida United Way

Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) 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. Last year, it raised and managed $24.4 million throughout Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. HFUW is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income, health and basic needs. It operates United Way 2-1-1, Central Florida’s information and assistance, crisis, suicide and referral helpline; Volunteer Resource Center; Gifts In Kind Center; Emergency Homelessness Services; and the Ryan White Part B program, which administers more than $2 million to provide HIV/AIDS services and referrals. HFUW impacts more than 650,000 individuals annually through its direct service and funded programs. United Way partners with local businesses, government, other charities to increase awareness of local health and human service issues and to inspire hope, provide options and create possibilities for people in need. Visit www.HFUW.org for more information, or call (407) 835-0900.

About Women United

Women United is an affinity group of Heart of Florida United Way that brings together passionate women. By combining the power of philanthropy, volunteerism and awareness, Women United addresses critical problems that affect women and children in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. Women United is chaired by Kari Conley, Duke Energy, and Karen Keene, Dean, Mead, Egerton, Bloodworth, Capouano & Bozarth, P.A. Women United Luncheon chairs are Anne-Marie Hayward, Coached by Design, and Tracey Powell, Walt Disney World Resort.

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