FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heart of Florida United Way to Honor Individuals, Groups and Organizations Making Positive Change in Central Florida during Another Challenging Year

Change Maker Impact Awards to honor those contributing to significant change throughout Central Florida

ORLANDO, Fla. (Sept. XX, 2021) – Through its mission, Heart of Florida United Way convenes the non-profit, public and private sectors to create a better life for every person in the tri-county area. Through the 4th Annual Change Maker Impact Awards, the organization will recognize passionate individuals and organizations who have contributed significant and lasting change in the Central Florida community over the past year. The event is virtually taking place on Thurs., Oct. 28 at 3:30 p.m.

“There’s no question that this past year has continued to present its own challenges as we continued to navigate a global pandemic while working to help keep our residents afloat, children safely in schools and our community healthy,” said Jeff Hayward, president & CEO, Heart of Florida United Way. “A Change Maker is someone who takes creative action to solve a social problem. Our honorees are the epitome of what it means to be one. Each have worked tirelessly to do what’s right for our community.”

This year, the LIVE UNITED Impact Award for Leadership will be given to George Aguel, president/CEO (retired) of Visit Orlando; Dave Krepcho, president/CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida; Rich Maladecki, president/CEO (retired) of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association; Chief Judge Frederick Lauten, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court (retired); Linda Sutherland, executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County (retired); and Karen Willis, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County.

The honorees from the Community Choice public nominations will be announced during the event and will include an Unsung Hero, Change Maker Junior, as well as Women United Impact Award and Mission United Impact Award, both new this year.

The Change Maker of the Year will be awarded to Heroes in Education. Hayward said, “This year, our Change Makers of the Year will be awarded to Orange, Seminole and Osceola School Districts’ instructional staff, administration and support professionals. They are our educational heroes day in and day out. Not only were they tasked with educating our children in an all new
way, but they also played the role of advocate to ensure children’s and families’ basic needs were met. Additionally, they put their own health on the line through the pandemic. Our local Heroes in Education have shown their commitment to our community, our children’s education, our families’ well-being and have remained adaptable through it all. This is why they are our Change Makers of the Year.”

Heart of Florida United Way has been recognizing Change Makers for the past three years. **Past Unsung Hero honorees** include Lisa Williams or LANES Teenage Girls; Kathleen Bean and Dr. Shanta’ Barton-Stubbs, founder and director, New Image Youth Center. **Past Impact Leader honorees** include Nancy Alvarez, morning anchor, WFTV; the late Harriett Lake, local philanthropist; Shelley Lauten, former CEO, Central Florida Commission on Homelessness; Dr. Antonia Novello, former U.S. Surgeon General; Father Jose Rodriguez, head pastor, Iglesia Episcopal Jesus de Nazaret; and Ed Timberlake, chairman, Central Florida Advisory Board, Seaside National Bank and Trust; SunTrust Bank. **Past Ground Breaker honorees** include BRIDG and Shaquem Griffin, former UCF linebacker and current Seattle Seahawks. **Past Legacy honorees** include Robert Stuart, former executive director, Christian Service Center; Carol & Barney Barnett; Dr. Phillips Charities; Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation; Jim Seneff, executive chairman, CNL Financial Group; Jacob Stuart, past president & CEO, Orlando Regional Chamber; Publix Supermarkets; Harris Rosen, president and COO of Rosen Hotels & Resorts; Walt Disney World Resort; and Dr. Nelson Ying. The **past LIVE UNITED honorees** include Lockheed Martin. The **past Change Maker of the Year Junior honoree** is Mike Newbold of Miles to Go. **Past Change Maker of the Year honorees** include healthcare heroes and first responders who helped to care for residents during COVID-19; Teresa Jacobs, former Orange County mayor, and the Walt Disney World Resort.

To register for the event, visit [hfuw.org/changemaker](http://hfuw.org/changemaker). Cost is $30 to attend. Visit hfuw.org to learn more about Heart of Florida United Way.

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**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. In 2018-19, it raised and managed more than $22.4 million in total resources, including $16.6 million raised for the Community Fund that invests in dozens of vital health programs in the community throughout Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. HFUW fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in Central Florida. It operates United Way 2-1-1, Central Florida’s information and assistance, crisis, suicide and referral helpline; Volunteer Resource Center and the Ryan White program, which administers nearly $3.2 million to provide HIV/AIDS services and referrals. HFUW impacts more than 400,000 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](http://www.HFUW.org) for more information, or call (407) 835-0900. Follow us on [Facebook](http://Facebook) at Heart of Florida United Way and on [Twitter](http://Twitter) and [Instagram](http://Instagram) @hfuw.

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