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Heart of Florida United Way Receives Grant from Bob Woodruff Foundation to Assist Military Veterans in Tri-County Area Impacted by COVID-19 with Housing Assistance

ORLANDO, Fla. (May 20, 2021) – Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) is one of 19 organizations across the United States to receive an NFL-Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) Salute to Service partnership grant in the organization’s Expedited cycle. It’s been designated to the Mission United COVID-19 Recovery Fund to provide emergency financial assistance to military veterans who’ve lost income due to COVID-19 sustain housing through the crisis and while funding is available.

“We are appreciative of the Bob Woodruff Foundation for their continued partnership with our Mission United program,” said Jeff Hayward, president/CEO of HFUW. “This is one of several programs through Heart of Florida United Way that supports Florida residents who have fallen on hard times. Since the beginning of the pandemic, requests for assistance have quadrupled. This assistance will ensure nearly 20 military veterans will remain stably housed throughout the crisis without adding debt from housing and utility payments. These individuals served our country and fought for our freedom. It’s the least we can do as a country – and community – to support our veterans.”

Mission United is a collective-impact initiative, and BWF local partner, that provides case management and direct assistance in housing and employment to ensure that veterans and their families maintain stability while seeking additional services.

Florida has one of the highest veteran populations in the United States, with more than 100,000 in the Orlando tri-county area. With 281,941 jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector alone, the Orlando Metropolitan area is also one of 15 communities cited in the BWF research paper, “Veterans and COVID-19: Projecting the Economic, Social, and Mental Health Needs of American's Veterans,” as facing significant economic impact due to the pandemic.

“We recognized early on that our veterans and their families were going to be facing a slew of urgent and long-term challenges due to COVID-19. Our original research paper helped us quickly pivot and push support where it is needed most,” said Anne Marie Dougherty, Chief Executive Officer of the Bob Woodruff Foundation. “Now more than ever, we need to step up for those who have selflessly served. We’re so proud to work with organizations across the country who are changing lives with this funding.”
Criteria to be considered to receive this one-time assistance includes being a military veteran who experienced job loss as a result of COVID-19. The veteran (and family) must also live within the City of Orlando or Orange, Osceola or Seminole counties.

Applications are now being accepted through https://hfuw.org/bob-woodruff-grant. Veterans must provide a DD214 (proof of military), letter from employer about employment status, photo ID and lease/rental agreement. All applications are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis as limited funds are available. Eligible applicants could qualify for up to $2,500.

Visit www.hfuw.org to learn more about the work of Heart of Florida United Way. Dial 2-1-1 to be pre-qualified to receive support through the Mission United program.

About Mission United
Established by Heart of Florida United Way in (insert date), Mission United is a collective effort that addresses the complicated and fragmented systems for veteran services currently in place. It is a community collaboration that serves as a central contact for veterans to access community support, ensuring that service members and their families are never more than two steps from the help they need. Mission United identifies gaps and creates systemic change in the areas of legal assistance, employment and education. For veterans and their families, help can be reached by dialing 2-1-1. Visit www.hfuw.org/mission-united to learn more.

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 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 for more information, or call (407) 835-0900. Follow us on Facebook at Heart of Florida United Way and on Twitter and Instagram @hfuw.

About the Bob Woodruff Foundation
The Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) was founded in 2006 after reporter Bob Woodruff was hit by a roadside bomb while covering the war in Iraq. Since then, the Bob Woodruff Foundation has led an enduring call to action for people to stand up for heroes and meet the emerging and long-term needs of today’s veterans. To date, BWF has invested over $70 million to Find, Fund and Shape™ programs that have empowered impacted veterans, service members, and their family members, across the nation. For more information, please visit bobwoodrufffoundation.org or follow us on Twitter at @Stand4Heroes.

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