**MEDIA ALERT**

Geico Donates Nearly 200 New ‘Shoes That Fit’ through Heart of Florida United Way to Distribute to Homeless Children

*Click here for event photos, credit Heart of Florida United Way*

**WHO**: Heart of Florida United Way and Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida

**WHAT**: One-in-five children in the U.S. live in poverty and shoes are one of the most expensive items for low-income families to purchase, especially when choosing between that or putting food on the table. Through Geico’s national partnership with California-based nonprofit Shoes that Fit, Heart of Florida United Way received a donation of 167 custom, new athletic shoes to distribute to youth who need them most. These shoes were distributed today to the youth currently in the programs at Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida – specifically the 21 children ages three-to-five years old within its Early Childhood Development Center. (All were given their shoes upon return to the shelter after school.) On any given night approximately 100 children are sheltered at Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida – or one-fourth of shelter residents.

**QUOTES:**
Delitza Fernandez, Project Manager, Community Investment & Strategic Impact Department, Heart of Florida United Way: “When we were approached by Geico with this opportunity, we knew we just had to make a difference in these children’s lives. Too many of our ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families had fallen on hard times for the very first time due to the pandemic. Many lost their homes and some ended up homeless. It was obvious to us that our agency partner, Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, would receive these so youth could have something new to wear to school or safely enjoy the playground activities. We hope this is a bright spot in their day and lessens the worry of their parents who are simply trying to make ends meet.”

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 delivered more than $23M in programs and services 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; Emergency Homelessness Services; and the
Ryan White Part B program, which administers nearly $3M to provide HIV/AIDS services and referrals. HFUW impacts more than 490,000 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 hfuw.org for more information, or call (407) 835-0900. Follow us on Facebook @HeartofFloridaUnitedWay or Instagram and Twitter @hfuw.

**About Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida**
Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida helps families and individuals return to safe, stable, permanent housing as quickly as possible. Each day, the Coalition serves up to 500 men, women, and children through its residential shelters, as well as more than 100 unsheltered individuals through its community initiatives. Last year alone, the Coalition ended homelessness for more than 1,600 people. For more information, visit CentralFloridaHomeless.org.

**About GEICO**
GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company), the second-largest auto insurer in the U.S., was founded in 1936 and insures more than 28 million vehicles in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A member of the Berkshire Hathaway family of companies, GEICO employs more than 43,000 associates countrywide. GEICO constantly strives to make lives better by protecting people against unexpected events while saving them money and providing an outstanding customer experience. Along with personal auto insurance, commercial auto and personal umbrella coverages are also available. Homeowners, renters, condo, flood, identity theft, term life, and more coverages are written through non-affiliated insurance companies and are secured through the GEICO Insurance Agency, Inc. Visit geico.com for a quote or to learn more.

**About Shoes That Fit**
A national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Claremont, CA., Shoes That Fit tackles one of the most visible signs of poverty in America by giving children in need new athletic shoes to attend school with dignity and joy, prepared to learn, play and thrive. Named a California Nonprofit of the Year, Shoes That Fit delivered new athletic shoes to approximately 104,000 children in more than 1,500 schools across all 50 states last year alone. Help ensure that no child misses school because they don't have shoes that fit by visiting shoesthatfit.org.

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