



NEWS

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Heart of Florida United Way

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Basics for Babies Drive Collects Needed Supplies for New Parents

Heart of Florida United Way Requests Diapers, Wipes and Formula to Provide to New Parents Facing Financial Hardship as Part of 4th Annual Community Baby Shower

ORLANDO, Fla. (May 6, 2024) – Having a baby can be one of the most significant experiences in life, but it can also be one of the most expensive. According to BabyCenter.com, common expenses for a baby’s first year now total more than \$15,000 with inflation. With nearly half of all Central Florida households struggling to make ends meet, these additional expenses can be financially devastating. That is why Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) is hosting a Basics for Babies Supply Drive throughout Orange, Seminole & Osceola counties as part of its 4th annual Community Baby Shower event.

The Basics for Babies Drive is collecting three essential baby supplies – diapers, wipes and formula. All sizes and quantities of diapers are welcome, as are all brands/varieties of baby formula. All items must be new, unopened and have an expiration date of December 2024 or later. Drop-off for collected items will be Friday, June 7 at HFUW’s office (1940 Cannery Way, Orlando, FL 32804). [To participate in the Basics for Babies Drive, sign up here.](#) Those interested in supporting this initiative can also [donate through HFUW’s website.](#)

“Expectant parents have a lot to do in preparing for the arrival of a new baby,” said Jeff Hayward, President & CEO, Heart of Florida United Way. “The Community Baby Shower is a way for our community to wrap our arms around these new and expectant parents to support and celebrate them, while also reducing some of the financial stress of this joyful time.”

HFUW’s Community Baby Shower event aims to shower 150 expectant families with care and much-needed supplies to celebrate their new addition to their families, while also reducing the financial burden of preparing for a baby. Each family will receive more than \$250 worth of items like diapers, wipes, clothes, bath items, toys, books, blankets and a \$50 gift card to fill in any additional needs before the baby’s arrival. Recipients of the Community Baby Shower have been pre-identified through partnerships with local nonprofit partners.

As platinum sponsors for this event, *Walt Disney World*® Resort is supporting the First Closet kit that includes starters onesies in a variety of sizes, bibs, hats and mittens; and AdventHealth is supporting the Safe Sleep kit with a book, pajama sets, sleep sack, pacifier and swaddle. Publix Charities is also a supporter of this event. Additional sponsorships are available.

According to [HFUW’s most recent ALICE Report](#), more than 386,000 Central Florida households struggle to pay for housing, utilities, food and other critical necessities. For a family of four with an infant and a preschooler, the annual ALICE Household Survival Budget, which is the basic cost needed to live and work in Central Florida, was \$74,576 in 2021. HFUW believes this to be an unrealistically conservative figure, with a more realistic annual budget for the same family being closer to \$86,000. Two people in Central Florida making minimum wage would

have to work more than three full-time jobs in order to make ends meet – or 130 hours per week combined every week of the year.

For more information about HFUW's Community Baby Shower event, to register as a volunteer, or donate, visit www.HFUW.org/CBS2024.

About Heart of Florida United Way

Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) stands up for the education, financial stability, health and basic needs of every person in Central Florida. Since 1939, HFUW has delivered programs, invested dollars, and convened community members around important issues impacting Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties. As Central Florida's most comprehensive health and human services nonprofit, HFUW created a \$50 million impact in Central Florida last year. In 2021-22, HFUW served more than 703,000 people through its direct service and funded programs. HFUW is home to notable community resources like the 211 Information & Referral Crisis Line; 988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline; Mission United program for Veterans; TECHquity, an initiative bridging the digital divide; Destination Graduation at Seminole State College; the Ryan White Part B & General Revenue program, which administers nearly \$2.3 million to provide HIV/AIDS services and referrals; the Planning Council Support program that facilitates community planning and priority setting for HIV services. United Way partners with individuals, local businesses, government, and other nonprofit agencies to open opportunities and close gaps in Central Florida. Visit www.HFUW.org for more information, or call (407) 835-0900. Follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn at Heart of Florida United Way and on Twitter and Instagram @hfuw.

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