FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:
Amber Hastings
amber@jarelcommunications.com
407-748-8714

Heart of Florida United Way Set to Distribute 6,500 Thanksgiving Meal Kits this Holiday Season

1,000 Volunteers Needed for Effort

ORLANDO, Fla. (Nov. 16, 2026) — Heart of Florida United Way will pack and distribute 6,500 Thanksgiving meal kits to families across Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties this November as part of its Thanksgiving Project. The collaborative effort is powered by volunteers, team members, board members, donors and sponsors, including FAIRWINDS Credit Union, Good Greek Moving & Storage, Lockheed Martin, Orlando Health, Publix Super Markets Charities, and Truist. Thanksgiving meal kits will be available for general public distribution at all locations from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Kits are provided on a first-come, first-served basis subject to availability, and distribution will conclude promptly at 12 p.m. or once all supplies are exhausted.

Now in its eighth year, the Thanksgiving Project supports individuals and families across Central Florida who are struggling to afford basic necessities. Many of these households are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) — working individuals and families who still face financial challenges and can be one unexpected expense away from hardship. By connecting ALICE households with essential resources and opportunities, Heart of Florida United Way helps ease the burden of difficult financial choices and build a path toward greater stability. This added support for ALICE families strengthens the Central Florida community and helps create a more resilient future for those trying to make ends meet.

Through its Thanksgiving Project, Heart of Florida United Way will provide each family with shelf-stable staples like canned vegetables, mashed potatoes, spices, and a gift card to help each family purchase the protein of their choice. With an estimated value of $30, this meal kit allows families to still participate in the holiday season.

“The holidays are a time for bringing families together, sharing the warmth of a meal, and creating memories that last a lifetime,” said Jeff Hayward, president and CEO of Heart of Florida United Way. “Every family deserves the joy and comfort of a Thanksgiving celebration. As the need continues to grow, we at Heart of Florida United Way are stepping up to reach even more neighbors this year by expanding our distribution of Thanksgiving meal kits to additional locations throughout Central Florida. Together, we are helping **light the way** to hope, connection, and the simple but meaningful joy of gathering around the table.”

In addition to key corporate partners, the project relies heavily on the dedication of approximately 1,000 volunteers. Volunteers will assemble the meal kits at the Central Florida

Fairgrounds from Nov. 13 to 21, and distribution to families will take place on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2026, at several locations throughout Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties.

Those interested in donating can visit Heart of Florida United Way. Volunteer opportunities can be found here.

About Heart of Florida United Way
Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) helps individuals and families in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties overcome life's challenges by providing the support they need to meet basic needs, achieve financial stability, and reach education goals. Since 1939, HFUW has united donors, volunteers, businesses, government, and nonprofit partners—helping **light the way** to a strong foundation for resilience, dignity, and a brighter future across Central Florida. During our 2025–2026 fiscal year, HFUW served more than 470,000 individuals across Central Florida through signature initiatives including 211 and 988, providing 24/7 information, referrals, and crisis support; VITA and Bank On, helping households build financial stability; and Community Schools, Help Me Grow, Destination Graduation, upliftED, Take Stock in Children, and Digital Horizons, expanding educational achievement and workforce readiness. HFUW also brings the community together through beloved annual initiatives such as the Thanksgiving Project, which helps provide holiday meals to families in need, and the Community Baby Shower, which equips expectant and new parents with essential resources and support. In 2026, HFUW introduced the United Learning Lab, which delivers technology, education, and essential support services directly into Central Florida neighborhoods. Together with community partners, HFUW is creating pathways to opportunity and ensuring every person has the resources to thrive. For more information, visit www.HFUW.org, call (407) 835-0900, or follow Heart of Florida United Way on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

###