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## **United Way of Collier and the Keys Invests \$175,000 to Benefit Local Residents**

**Florida Keys** – United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) is excited to announce \$175,000 in grants to 20 nonprofits, benefitting residents from Key West to Key Largo. After a rigorous application process, these 2020-21 Community Investment funded partner agencies have been selected by the UWCK Board of Directors to work with UWCK providing access to nutritious food, education, and financial stability for the Monroe County community.

UWCK is committed to investing in and working to create a community where all individuals and families in Collier and Monroe Counties have an opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential. However, nearly half of Monroe County residents are considered ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). Due to the high cost of living and circumstances beyond their control, these households live paycheck to paycheck and are unable to make ends meet on a daily basis.

Now, in the midst of the pandemic, an even greater number of residents are struggling than ever before, relying on United Way and our partners to help meet their most basic needs. Over the next year, UWCK support through these 20 nonprofit partners will help ensure these residents have food on the table, quality childcare for their children, and prevent them from slipping further into poverty or homelessness. In light of COVID-19, these programs are even more critical to our friends and neighbors now and as we move forward.

Working alongside the 20 partner nonprofits through these 25 programs, UWCK will better the lives of more than 15,000 local Keys residents this year.

### **2020-21 grant recipients providing access to nutritious food include:**

- **BURTON MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, \$11,500**, to supply groceries through their food pantry and hot dinners once a week and on holidays.
- **FLORIDA KEYS HEALTHY START COALITION, \$4,500**, to provide nutritional information and education for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants, and toddlers, as well as specialty foods and related supplies for families in crisis.
- **FLORIDA KEYS OUTREACH COALITION, \$8,500**, to support their primary and secondary food pantries in Key West.
- **INDEPENDENCE CAY, \$5,000**, to provide hot meals and shower/laundry facilities in Marathon.
- **KEYS AREA INTERDENOMINATIONAL RESOURCES, \$10,000**, to stock and maintain their Marathon food pantry.
- **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH KEY WEST, \$6,000**, to deliver meals and groceries to elderly Key West shut-in residents.
- **MONROE ASSOCIATION FOR REMARKABLE CITIZENS, \$2,000**, to provide a nutritious lunch and teach cooking skills and basic healthy eating for clients with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- **STAR OF THE SEA FOUNDATION, \$25,000**, to obtain bulk and recovered food throughout the Keys to make fresh produce and nutritious foods available to low-income families.
- **WESLEY HOUSE FAMILY SERVICES, \$4,000**, to provide a backpack of nutritious food each weekend for children enrolled at the Inez Martin Daycare Center in Key West and their siblings.

UWCK focuses on access to food as a critical need as it improves residents' health and quality of life. Our support helping provide food also frees up resident's resources for other necessities, thereby increasing financial stability.

**2020-21 grant recipients providing education include:**

- **BAHAMA VILLAGE MUSIC PROGRAM, \$6,000**, to support before and after school music lessons for children in the Lower Keys.
- **BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE KEYS AREA, \$5,500**, to provide scholarships for summer camp fees for children.
- **BURTON MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, \$4,500**, to provide childcare scholarships for Upper Keys children at their Child Development Center.
- **FLORIDA KEYS HEALTHY START COALITION, \$6,000**, to facilitate early childhood programs Keys-wide to educate young children and to strengthen and nurture the parent-child relationship.
- **GRACE JONES COMMUNITY CENTER, \$7,000**, to keep costs low at their childcare center for children of working parents in the Marathon area.
- **MARATHON RECREATION CENTER, \$7,000**, to provide safe and nurturing after school care to those children whose parents are least able to afford standard rates.
- **ST COLUMBA EPISCOPAL CHURCH, \$6,000**, to provide free after school care and camp programs at The Hammock House in Marathon.
- **KREATIVE KIDS, \$4,000**, to provide a secure and healthy environment for children in Marathon to learn and be nurtured.
- **YMCA OF SOUTH FLORIDA, \$6,000**, to support the Upper Keys YMCA after school program.

UWCK focuses on providing quality childcare, as success in life begins with education. We're working to ensure every child gets a strong start in life, has the tools to learn and grow, and ultimately thrive, while also ensuring parents are able to work knowing they have a safe, educational environment for their children.

**2020-21 grant recipients providing safety net services to improve financial stability:**

- **CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI, \$7,000**, to provide emergency financial assistance for Keys residents in the form of rent or mortgage and utilities assistance.
- **DOLPHINS TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, \$2,000**, to support the Living Water Rx Project, providing critical prescription medication assistance to Monroe County residents.
- **FLORIDA KEYS AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER PROGRAM, \$6,000**, to offer primary care medical services at school clinics throughout the Keys.
- **FLORIDA KEYS OUTREACH COALITION, \$18,000**, to prevent homelessness of financially challenged and housing insecure residents by providing emergency assistance throughout Monroe County.
- **INDEPENDENCE CAY, \$2,500**, to provide housing, support, guidance and referrals for men in the Marathon area.
- **KEYS AREA INTERDENOMINATIONAL RESOURCES, \$8,000**, to help Middle Keys families with obtaining or maintaining housing.
- **LEGAL SERVICES OF GREATER MIAMI, \$3,000**, to provide Legal Assistance Clinics to assist Monroe County's residents, removing legal barriers to financial stability.

UWCK focuses on increasing financial stability and empowering residents to achieve economic security. Through United Way partners and programs, we help individuals and families face financial obstacles that prevent a good quality of life.



**Stanford Law Students provided valuable volunteer legal assistance with local volunteer lawyers at the Key Largo and Marathon Legal Clinics, made possible by UWCK support to Legal Services of Greater Miami.**



**Hammock House in Marathon provides quality, safe after school and summer childcare with support made possible by UWCK.**

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**About United Way of Collier and the Keys:**

United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) is committed to improving lives and strengthening our community so all individuals and families have an opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential. As a local volunteer-driven organization, UWCK advocates for Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed (ALICE) residents in our communities looking for a hand-up by providing them information and referral and supportive tools and resources. We accomplish this through improving education, economic stability and health, as well as providing access to food and critical safety net services for all Collier and Monroe County residents.