

THE UNITEI



Save the Date

April 10

**Women
United
Volunteer
Project**

Supporters like you make it possible for United Way of Central Florida to drive long-term solutions in early learning, financial security, and essential services.

April 11
**Highlands
County
Women
United
Spring
Soirée**

Right now, Leadership gifts of \$1,000 or more will be matched, doubling the difference for those ready to take that step.

This opportunity can help fund early learning programs, expand literacy resources for families, and provide financial coaching for individuals working toward stability. If you know someone looking to make a greater

April 23

impact, now is the perfect time to encourage them to give and have their gift go twice as far. [Learn more.](#)

**Highlands
County
Day of
Caring**

May 14

**Annual
Celebratio
n**



Annual Award Nominations Now Open

Save the date for the United Way of Central Florida Annual Celebration Luncheon at Bonnet Springs Park on May 14, 2026! Sponsorship opportunities are now available. Please email RD@uwcf.org if you are interested in more information.

Nominations are now open for two of our annual awards: [Difference-Maker](#) and the [Carol Jenkins Barnett Success By 6 Child Advocacy Award](#). Please consider submitting nominations today.

PEFCU Literacy Kits Making a Difference



We loved partnering with Publix Employees Federal Credit Union for a hands-on volunteer project during their company-wide meeting in Lakeland. Team members came together to give back to local families, making the day meaningful while strengthening teamwork. [Check out a quick video.](#)

Want to create a similar experience for your organization? United Way of Central Florida offers DIY volunteer kit days: UWCF handles logistics, delivers unassembled kits, and your team assembles them.

Get started today: RD@uwcf.org or 863.648.1500 x222. Let's make a difference together!

Judd Jog 5K | Saturday, April 25



Lace up for a great cause at the Judd Jog 5K on Saturday, April 25 in Winter Haven. This annual race, hosted by Polk Sheriff's Charities, brings our community together to support United Way and the neighbors we serve.

The event kicks off at 8:00 a.m. at the Polk County Sheriff's Office and includes family-friendly activities like K-9 meet-and-greets and special operations displays—making it fun for runners and spectators alike.

[Sign Up!](#)

Hardee & Highlands News

Hardee County Behind the Badge



What an incredible day at Behind the Badge! Thank you to everyone who joined us at Pioneer Park to celebrate and support the heroes who serve our community each day. From the K-9 meet and greet and SWAT demonstration to live music, family fun, and the crowd-





favorite rubber duck race down the Peace River, it was a memorable day in Hardee County.

We are especially grateful to Sheriff Vent Crawford and the Hardee County Sheriff's Office for their partnership in bringing this event to life.

Thank you to our mission partners,

Publix,
Publix
Super
Markets
Charities,
Polk
County
Governm
ent, and
George
Jenkins
Foundatio
n, for
their
continued
support.

We also
appreciat
e our
event
sponsors,
Walmart,
Peace
River
Electric
Cooperati
ve,
Mosaic,
and the
Hardee
County
Sheriff's
Office,
along
with the

many
volunteer
s and
supporter
s who
made the
day
possible.

Because
of you,
proceeds
from this
event will
support
United
Way of
Central
Florida
programs
that
strengthe
n Hardee
County.



Women United Volunteers for Who I Am Foundation



Earlier this month, volunteers from Highlands County Women United rolled up their sleeves and packed 270 foster care kits for the Who I Am Foundation.

These kits will help provide comfort and essential items to children in foster care. We are grateful for the dedicated volunteers who took the time to make a difference for youth in our community.

Together, we're showing that when women unite, amazing things happen.

HCA Florida Highlands Hospital Creates Hygiene Kits



Earlier this month, the team at [HCA Florida Highlands Hospital](#) created 125 hygiene kits for Pete's Pantry at [South Florida State College](#).

One quick break, one big impact.

Thank you to the [HCA Florida Highlands Hospital](#) Team for your time and heart!

Contact Shawn Beumel
at Shawn.Beumel@uwcf.org to set up
a kit day for your organization!

Women United Spring Soiree in Lake Placid



Join us for an unforgettable Women United gathering in Lake Placid on April 11 at the beautiful home of a Women United member.

Enjoy breathtaking views, shop curated local vendors, savor delicious hors d'oeuvres, and connect with passionate, like-minded leaders committed to making a difference. This event is open to current and prospective Women United members, so bring a friend who is ready to turn her passion into impact.

A portion of all vendor sales will support United Way of Central Florida.

[Register for Lake Placid](#)

Get Involved

Women United Book Bundling for ReadingPals



Help spark a love of reading by assembling book bundles for ReadingPals students.

This hands-on project is a fun way to give back, connect with fellow Women United members and friends, and make a direct impact in our community. Bring a friend, kids are welcome too!

April 10 | 3:00–5:00 p.m.

United Way of Central Florida

[Sign Up!](#)

ReadingPals Needs Volunteers



ReadingPals are volunteers who spend one hour each week in kindergarten classrooms throughout Polk County, helping students read.

Volunteers are still needed! Interested in joining us? We would love to have you be a part of this program. [Learn more.](#)

[Sign Up!](#)

Find Help

Free Tax Help Available Now



United Way of Central Florida is offering FREE tax preparation through the VITA program across Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties. Our IRS-certified volunteers can help eligible households file accurately and maximize their refund.

Now – April 11, 2026

Sites throughout Polk, Hardee, and
Highlands counties

File your taxes accurately and for free
at [MyFreeTaxes.com](https://www.myfreetaxes.com) or find a site
near you via the link below!

[Find a Tax Site](#)

End Hunger Initiative



Are you struggling to put food on the table? With 20 healthy food pantry sites around Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties, UWCF is helping to supply families with boxes of frozen meat, fresh produce and dry goods at no cost!

[Find Your Nearest Healthy Food Pantry](#)

Thank you to our Polk County Food Pantry Sponsor, The George Jenkins Foundation, our Highlands County Food Pantry Sponsor, AdventHealth and our Hardee County Food Pantry Sponsor, the State of Florida.

211 Get Connected. Get Help.



United Way's 211 is the most comprehensive source of human and social services information in the country. Our teams of compassionate, highly trained specialists are available 24/7 to connect you with the best services available in Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties.

[Find Help Now](#)

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

[LOCAL RESOURCES](#)

[VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES](#)

Our mission is to inspire our community to give, advocate and volunteer by identifying needs and mobilizing vetted resources to create positive, local change.