

THE UNITED



**Save the
Date**

February 7

**Brunch in a
Box**

February 17

UWCF Approves \$5.1M in Community Investments

United Way of Central Florida has approved \$5.1 million in Community Investment Team allocations for 2025–26, supporting 69 programs across Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties. These investments strengthen youth opportunity, financial security, healthy community, and community resiliency, impacting more than 180,000 individuals and families across our region.

[Read the full article to learn more.](#)

Cocktails & Conversations

February 26

Bayou Bash in Highlands County

March 28

Women United Garden Party

April 11

Highlands County Women United Spring Soirée

April 11

Highlands County Women United Spring Soirée

May 14

Annual Celebration



Tocqueville Toast hosted by Lynn & Paul Noris



Last week, we had the pleasure of gathering with our Alexis de Tocqueville and Démocratie donors for a special evening of connection and conversation. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the generosity and leadership of those who play a vital role in advancing our mission.

We extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated Alexis de Tocqueville Committee for their leadership and support, and to our gracious hosts, Lynn and Paul Noris, for opening their home and helping create such a welcoming and meaningful experience.

Thank you to all our donors for their continued commitment to making a lasting impact in our community.

To learn more about our Leadership Giving levels, please contact Melissa Innella at Melissa.Innella@uwcf.org or [make a gift now.](#)



ASD/Adaptive Swim Safety Webinar

ASD/Adaptive Swim Safety Webinar



Tuesday, February 3rd at noon

Learn drowning prevention techniques by understanding triggers and creating safety strategies. Gain practical skills you can use at home and leave with free resources!

Hosted by UWCF Success By 6, Swim Angelfish and Swim Dynamic.

Scan here
to
register:



For children with ASD and adaptive needs, water safety is especially critical. Join us for a FREE ASD/Adaptive Swim Safety Webinar to learn drowning-prevention strategies, understand common triggers, and gain practical tools you can use at home.

Tuesday, February 3 | Noon

Free resources included

Hosted by UWCF Success By 6, Swim Angelfish, and Swim Dynamic Lakeland.

Scan the QR code or click below.

[Sign up Now](#)

Hardee & Highlands News

Highlands County Bayou Bash



Join us for the annual Highlands County Bayou Bash on February 26— an evening of fun, fellowship, and philanthropy in support of our local community.

Enjoy live entertainment from B's Keys Dueling Pianos, bid on exciting silent auction items, and indulge in drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres throughout the night.

Leadership Giving Association members are invited to attend at no cost as a thank-you for your continued generosity.

Non-member tickets are \$50, with all proceeds benefiting the United Way of Central Florida Highlands County campaign.

[Register Now](#)

Thank You to our Bayou Bash Sponsors

Thank you to our Bayou Bash sponsors for their generous support. Because of you, we're able to host an incredible event while maximizing the dollars reinvested back into the Highlands County community. Every dollar raised locally stays local, supporting programs that help individuals and families across Highlands County.

Thank you to: Insight Auctioneers, LeaderOne Financial, Lakeside Dental Arts, Highlands Jewelers, Central Florida Property Management, Duke Energy – Sebring, Get Fish Slapped, Ridge Energy Savers, Seacoast Bank, South Florida State College, SouthState Bank, Berkshire Hathaway, Bullgator Plumbing, Crews Bank & Trust, Down and Dirty Cleaning Services, Glades Electric, Haynes Pest Control, Heartland Tax and Accounting, Longs AC, Turner Furniture, Sevigny & Associates Eye Care, SOS Septic and Sewer, and Brooke Britt-State Farm Insurance.

To get involved or become a sponsor, contact Shawn Beumel at Shawn.Beumel@uwcf.org.

United We Shine: School Spirit Showdown



Watch the videos from local schools and vote with a donation for your favorite entry. Every vote helps your school win bragging rights and a special event hosted by United Way.

Support your school. Make an impact.
Cast your vote today!

[Vote Now](#)

Get Involved

Brunch in a Box hosted by Women United



Treat yourself or a loved one to curated deliciousness and support Success By 6! Brunch in a Box is a drive-through fundraiser hosted by Women United.

Feb 7 | 10 a.m.–12 p.m. | South Lakeland

This year's boxes are better than ever—choose Traditional, Tailgate, or Picnic!

5 lucky boxes hide a GOLDEN TICKET for amazing prizes:

- One-night stay at Palmetto Marriott Resort & Spa
- Florida Gator football tickets (two pairs available)
- Three-night oceanfront stay in New Smyrna Beach
- Half Day with Superintendent Heid

[Order By Feb. 1](#)

Thank you to our Brunch in a Box Sponsors

Thank you to our generous Women United Brunch in a Box sponsors for their continued support. Because of your commitment, we're able to support Success By 6 programming in our community.

Thank you to: CPS Investment Advisors, Bell-Barnett Family Fund within the GiveWell Community Foundation, Boyer Building Corporation, Central Florida Health Care, Optify, Dr. Rod & Jeanette Crowley, Lu & John Fitzwater, Barn at Lazy P Ranch, Stuart's Plumbing, The Lay Group, Cross Wired Electrical Services LLC, and ConnectED Polk.

To learn more about Women United or become a Brunch in a Box sponsor, please contact Melissa Innella at Melissa.Innella@uwcf.org.

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 — at no cost.

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.

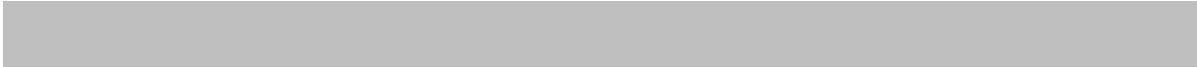
211 Get Connected. Get Help.



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](#)

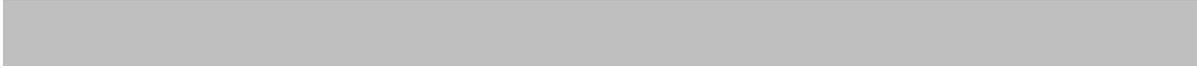


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[VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES](#)

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



MISSION PARTNERS



United Way of Central Florida | 5605 US HWY 98 South | Lakeland, FL 33812 US

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