

UNITED We Can!



United Way of
St. Lucie & Okeechobee

MEETING BASIC NEEDS IN ACTION

In these challenging times, meeting the basic needs of people in our community and helping them develop skills to reduce their dependence on services is critical. The United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee is helping address the immediate needs of people right here in our community. The goal is simple — all individuals and families in our community will have their basic needs met. With your support, the United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee is investing in basic needs programs to help people overcome crisis, lay the groundwork for independence and help families at risk of foreclosure or eviction stay in their homes.

GOAL: That all St. Lucie and Okeechobee community members are economically stable and self-sufficient by ensuring residents have access to basic needs such as food, temporary or permanent shelter, assistance with rent/mortgage payments, assistance with utility payments and removing other immediate and short-term barriers to safety or work.

BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF ST. LUCIE & OKEECHOBEE:

- Children's Home Society of the Treasure Coast
- Grace Way Village
- Life Builders of the Treasure Coast
- Mustard Seed Ministries
- Sarah's Kitchen
- House of Hope
- Salvation Army



UNITED WE CAN: MEET BASIC NEEDS

GOAL: All St. Lucie and Okeechobee students enter school ready to learn and graduate prepared for careers by helping children and families achieve education through a focus on kindergarten readiness, proficient reading by grade three, chronic absenteeism, behavioral issues, academic achievement and college and career readiness.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF ST. LUCIE & OKEECHOBEE:

- Early Learning Coalition – St. Lucie County
- PACE Center for Girls
- Tools for Schools St. Lucie
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of St. Lucie, Indian River, & Okeechobee Counties
- Okeechobee Education Foundation
- Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties
- Roundtable of St. Lucie County
- YMCA



EDUCATION IN ACTION

Shelby and her son Levi are now on the path to success. They join thousands of other people who have benefited from United Way programs and partnerships that increase childhood literacy, ensure youth graduate high school, supplied teachers and classrooms with much needs resources and help adults find housing and employment. Together we create better opportunities for all. Through the United Way of St. Lucie and Okeechobee's programs and partners, children, teens and young adults are now more prepared to be successful in school and life. Shelby and Levi are who we are fighting to empower.

UNITED WE CAN: EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITY

GOAL: Families become financially stable and independent by focusing on obtaining and maintaining safe, decent, and affordable housing; provide job readiness and skills training for individuals to acquire basic education, post-secondary education and soft skills required in the workforce; and stabilization for low-income families to access the supports necessary to manage their expenses.

FINANCIAL STABILITY PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF ST. LUCIE & OKEECHOBEE:

- Helping People Succeed
- Mustard Seed Ministries
- Arc of St. Lucie County
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)



FINANCIAL STABILITY IN ACTION

Byron, a father of five, learned he might qualify for an Earned Income Tax Credit. While preparing taxes at a VITA site, he learned he was eligible for \$5,600 in EITC. With that money, he was able to tackle his home's mold problem, which was giving one of his children headaches and asthma flare-ups. Byron is one of thousands of residents who have benefited from the VITA program — just one-way United Way of St. Lucie and Okeechobee is creating financial stability. In the last two years, this program put approximately **\$2,166,923 million** back in the hands of hardworking families though free tax preparation assistance. Byron and his family are who we are fighting to empower.

UNITED WE CAN: EMPOWER FINANCIAL STABILITY

GOAL: All St. Lucie and Okeechobee residents lead active, safe and healthy lives.

THE FIGHT: Improving people's health & well-being.

THE WIN: Access to healthcare for people with limited to no access to services, including caregivers; decrease infant mortality; and access to preventative care for children through age 20 and the elderly.

HEALTH PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF ST. LUCIE & OKEECHOBEE:

- Helping People Succeed
- Florida Department of Health – St. Lucie
- HANDS of St. Lucie County
- Healthy Start Coalition of SLC
- Tykes & Teens
- Inner Truth Project
- Okeechobee Healthy Start
- Martha's House
- Hibiscus Children's Center
- Light of the World Charities
- Project Lift



HEALTH IN ACTION

Stephen has uncontrollable aggressive behaviors that get him in trouble with his parents as well as at the schools he attended. He's been expelled from three separate schools. Stephen is only eight years old. It was time for a change to happen for this little boy. He and his family were referred to a program funded by the United Way of St. Lucie and Okeechobee where they met weekly with a therapist to help him acquire the tools and support to bring change his behavior. He's even developing friendships. Everything is better with a friend. Stephen is who we're fighting to empower.

TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

Tools for Schools St. Lucie serves the needs of children throughout the St. Lucie Public School system by providing donated school supplies. This rewarding opportunity not only helps students but teachers by alleviating the worry of inequity when planning classroom projects.

Tools for Schools believes every student should have access to the tools they need to succeed, regardless of income.

FACT:

- **553 teachers** received **more than \$71,482 in supplies** to benefit more than **14,000** students each year.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

A Community Partnership School has been established at White City Elementary. Community Partnership Schools improve student outcomes by transforming schools into resource hubs that offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, families and the surrounding neighborhood.

Community Partnership Schools focus on academics, health, social services and community engagement.

FACT:

- Community Partnership Schools lead to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.

VITA

Creating opportunities through financial stability is a pillar of the United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee. This empowers hardworking families with the tools, training, and opportunities to prosper.

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. VITA sites offer free tax help to:

- People who generally make \$58,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

While the IRS manages the VITA program, the sites are operated by IRS partners such as the United Way and staffed by IRS-certified volunteers. VITA services are not only free, but are also a reliable and trusted source for preparing tax returns.

FACTS:

- **4** locations open for **82** days of service
- **897** federally accepted tax returns completed
- **\$1.3 million** in tax refunds returned to the community



FUNDED PROGRAMS

In 2022, more than **\$1.2 million** was invested in St. Lucie and Okeechobee counties.



PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY THE UNITED WAY OF ST. LUCIE & OKEECHOBEE :

- Arc of St. Lucie County
- Children's Home Society
- Early Learning Coalition St. Lucie County
- St. Lucie County Health Department
- Grace Way Village
- HANDS of St. Lucie County
- Healthy Start Coalition of SLC
- Helping People Succeed
- Hibiscus Children's Center
- Inner Truth Project
- Life Builders of the Treasure Coast
- Light of the World Charities
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- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- House of Hope
- Okeechobee Education Foundation
- Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin & Okeechobee Counties
- Okeechobee Healthy Start

DAY OF CARING

Day of Caring is an annual community-wide effort that brings together volunteers and local businesses to provide short term, project-focused volunteer service with non-profit and public organizations to experience the intrinsic rewards of contributing to the well-being of our region.



United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee

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Scan to view our Community Accountability documents.



United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. No goods or services were received in consideration for this gift. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free within the state (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State. As required by FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee's registration # is SC-00016. 100% of all contributions are received by our organization.