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Granite United Way Announces Investments ~ Delivers More than \$2 Million in Support to Merrimack County

Merrimack County volunteers announce funding decisions for 2017

(Concord, New Hampshire) – Granite United Way’s annual campaign mobilizes more than 20,000 donors and corporate supporters to raise more than \$8.7 million across the state of New Hampshire. The campaign benefits more than 750 nonprofit agencies and programs providing services to more than 350,000 individuals. Volunteers are mobilized from each local region in its footprint to review and vet proposals and make funding decisions based upon strict criteria that ensures investments are held to the highest standards and are producing the greatest, most cost-efficient impact. In addition to the volunteer-led grant investment process and donor designation program, initiatives like Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), the 2-1-1NH information & referral line and FamilyWize, a prescription drug discount program deliver a combined total of nearly \$14 million in support to residents across New Hampshire.

Local volunteers from Merrimack County on Granite United Way’s Community Review Team dedicated the last few months to evaluating program proposals and determining their investment recommendations that were made to the local Community Impact Committee for Merrimack County. **Together, the volunteer Board of Directors and Merrimack Valley Community Impact Committee, announced that more than \$2 Million in support will be delivered to this community during 2017.**

This year the volunteer teams focused their Request for Proposal on four of the focus areas within in Community Health Improvement Plan for the region; the misuse of drugs and alcohol, access to comprehensive behavioral health services, educational achievement and economic well being.

“Each year I am impressed with the dedication shown by our local volunteers who lead the grant funding decisions. This year they were presented with a tremendous number of quality applicants, and they contributed hundreds of hours to the decision process,” said Patrick Tufts, President and CEO of Granite United Way. “As the needs of the community continue to evolve, our volunteers are responding to those needs.”

“In the past few years we’ve seen more and more collaboration, both with agency partners and our funding partners,” said Tufts. “Each of us recognize the importance of working together because no one organization can solve the complex issues we face.”

As part of the innovative new business “Get on the Bus” Challenge, **6 new companies either hosted a workplace campaign or made a corporate gift – generating \$26,000 in support this year.**

Through Granite United Way’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, **more than \$1.3 Million in federal refunds, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), was delivered to low to moderate income households in Merrimack County.**

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Granite United Way collaborated with several local organizations to ensure that the **Cold Weather Shelter was open and provided a safe, warm shelter for an average of 30-40 homeless individuals each night in Merrimack County this year.**

Partners like Chris Emond, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central NH, and Johane Telgener from Concord Hospital who is also a donor and volunteer, support the direction Granite United Way's volunteers have embraced in their funding decisions.

"Nonprofits are facing different challenges today than they were 10 years ago. By working alongside Granite United Way, we've had the opportunity evolve our partnership over that time and as a result we are addressing our community's most pressing needs," said Christopher Emond, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central NH. "One immediate need is the income-inequality issue we see first hand at the Club. United Way works with us to help those families that are still earning minimum wage in our community."

"As a donor and volunteer, I am impressed with the investments the Merrimack County volunteers are making through Granite United Way. By continuing to focus their community funding on the areas identified in the Community Health Improvement Plan we can be confident that donor dollars are leveraged in the most efficient way possible," said Johane Telgener of Concord Hospital. "These volunteers are taking a hard look at our community and really considering where United Way funds can be utilized for the greatest outcomes."

Funded programs will receive notification this week.

For more information about Granite United Way, visit www.graniteuw.org.

Granite United Way

Granite United Way is an experienced and trusted organization dedicated to leveraging the resources of investors and volunteers to create lasting change by addressing the underlying causes of our community's most pressing needs.

United Way's purpose is to convene public, private, and governmental leaders and resources to tackle the largest, most pressing issues facing our community. These issues include, but are not limited to: Providing children with the tools they need to read at grade level, putting them on the path to becoming successful, contributing members of our community. Offering free assistance from trained tax professionals to ensure that low income individuals and families file their taxes properly and timely, and utilize qualified tax credits to begin to build their own capital, Administering a statewide, comprehensive 24 hour a day/ 365 days a year help hot-line called 2-1-1 that quickly delivers help to any resident in New Hampshire

Granite United Way works with over 1,000 companies, 25,000 investors and thousands of volunteers every year to make our communities a better place. Granite United Way is rated a Platinum Participant by GuideStar and a Three Star Charity Navigator, two of the nation's largest nonprofit rating sources.

Granite United Way serves the Central Region, Merrimack County, North Country, Northern Region, Southern Region (Manchester / Derry / Salem) and Upper Valley Regions of New Hampshire as well as Windsor County, Vermont. For more information, visit www.graniteuw.org.

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