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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Granite United Way Announce Community Investments ~ Delivers More than \$881,000 in Support in the Upper Valley**

*Upper Valley volunteers target Education, Income, Health, and Legal and Safety investments*

(West Lebanon, New Hampshire) – Granite United Way’s annual campaign mobilizes more than 20,000 donors and corporate supporters to raise more than \$8.22 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. By mobilizing volunteers 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 and Windsor County, Vermont.

Local volunteers from the Upper Valley on Granite United Way’s Community Review Teams dedicated the last few months to evaluating program proposals and determining their investment recommendations for the Upper Valley. **Together, with the volunteer Board of Directors and Community Impact Committees, they announced that the 2015 Campaign would deliver more than \$881,000 in support this year to the Upper Valley.**

This year the volunteer teams focused their Request for Proposal in four main areas: Education, Income, Health, and Legal and Safety with an emphasis on addressing the needs of the low income wage earner.

In addition to funding local nonprofit programs, Granite United Way distributes funding in a number of ways from a generous designation program where donors contribute funds to more than 750 nonprofit agencies and programs across the state to statewide initiatives, like the 2-1-1NH information & referral call center that took over 45,000 calls last year and is now working with local and state agencies to address the substance misuse crisis. Support is also distributed to initiatives like the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which provides free tax preparation from sites like the one in White River Junction to more than 5,000 households and brought more than \$6 million in federal refunds to New Hampshire households, including \$2 million in Earned Income Tax Credit.

In the Upper Valley one of the most well received initiatives is Working Bridges, an employer collaborative, convened by Granite United Way, that is dedicated to improving workplace productivity, retention, advancement and financial stability for employees. The program is in its second year in the Upper Valley and continues to serve as a model for other Granite United Way regions as an example of effective collaboration.

“Our volunteers are working alongside us to forging new partnerships and developing new solutions to old problems. We are mobilizing our agency partners and leveraging our donor dollars in ways that even five years ago may not have seemed possible,” said Patrick Tufts, President and CEO of Granite United Way. “We were extremely impressed with the quality of applicants this year and how organizations are embracing a collaborative approach to their work.”

- More -

This year marks the third year of implementing the Strategic Plan the Board of Directors adopted in 2013. Funding decisions in each of Granite United Way's six regions and encourage collaborative efforts between agencies to create deeper, more lasting impact.

"We know that it is impossible for any one organization to address all of the issues in our community. It's critical that we work together with local nonprofits, community leaders and corporate partners to address difficult problems in new, effective ways," said Tufts.

Partners like Jeannette Birge, Director of the Upper Valley Office of Child & Family Services of New Hampshire agrees with that concept. Child & Family Services works to advance the well-being of children and families through an array of social services.

"The partnership Granite United Way creates with the non-profits in the Upper Valley is truly a key to our successes. The financial support is critical; but beyond that, GUW facilitates collaboration among the agencies that enables us to share ideas and needs, and enhances our ability to support and complement one other. All of our jobs would be so much more difficult without our United Way's support!" Jeannette Birge, Director of the Upper Valley Office of Child & Family Services of New Hampshire.

Funded programs will receive notification this week.

For more information about Granite United Way, visit [www.graniteuw.org](http://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 highly rated by both GuideStar and 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](http://www.graniteuw.org).*

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