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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Granite United Way Announce Community Investments ~ Delivers Nearly \$950,000 in Support to the Upper Valley**

*Upper Valley volunteers announce funding for local programs*

(West Lebanon, New Hampshire) – Local volunteers have dedicated the last few months to evaluating program proposals and determining their investment decisions for Upper Valley. **Together the volunteer Board of Directors and the Upper Valley Community Impact Committee announced that the 2017 Campaign would deliver nearly \$950,000 in support during 2018 to the Upper Valley. As a result of the Upper Valley campaign, more than 48 individual programs are being funded, and nearly 50,000 people will be served in the region.**

Upper Valley volunteers focused funding decisions on stabilizing the low income wage earner, helping their neighbors across the region maintain stable employment, address home repairs, and access important needs like dental services, housing and behavioral health care. In addition, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helped to return over \$156,000 in federal tax refunds to Upper Valley residents, including over \$58,000 in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC.)

Granite United Way's annual campaign mobilizes more than 20,000 donors and corporate supporters to raise more than \$8.8 million across the state of New Hampshire and Windsor County, Vermont.

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 2-1-1 NH 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.

"We are grateful for incredible volunteer support in the Upper Valley. This year nearly 1,500 volunteer hours were dedicated to making thoughtful, strategic decisions on where to invest United Way donor dollars," said Patrick Tufts, President and CEO of Granite United Way.

"Willing Hands is proud to be a Granite United Way recipient agency. The support we receive allows Willing Hands to recover over 500,000 pounds of fresh perishable food each and make weekly deliveries to over 4,500 people. In the words of a recipient of Willing Hands' produce: "Your benevolent work allows me to eat fresh, often organic, fruits, vegetables, and meat . . . Wow – you are truly wonderful. Thank you!" said Gabe Zoerheide, Executive Director at Willing Hands.

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 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](http://www.graniteuw.org).*

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