CELEBRATING 75 YEARS
TOWN OF PALM BEACH UNITED WAY
# United Way Through the Decades

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How it all began . . .

In March 1945, a group of civic leaders on the island of Palm Beach felt their fundraising efforts would be more effective if they separated from the Community Chest of the Palm Beaches. They decided to establish an organization of their own, operated entirely within Palm Beach, under the sole direction of Palm Beach residents. R. Stuyvesant Pierrepont was elected as the first president and the first campaign set the goal of $64,177. The campaign exceeded its goal, raising $70,575 to support 13 nonprofit agencies in Palm Beach County. Four of the original organizations are still funded by the Town of Palm Beach United Way today.

In the past 75 years the population of Palm Beach County has exploded from an estimated 100,000 in 1945 to more than 1.4 million today. Society has changed, needs have changed, but the Town of Palm Beach United Way has kept its mission of improving lives and building a stronger, healthier community for all residents. Over the years, our United Way has raised over $116 million to help those in Palm Beach County who need it the most.

TRADITION OF LEADERSHIP

The Town of Palm Beach United Way draws its strength, character, purpose, and longevity from remarkable leadership. The organization was founded on a simple concept - if everyone gives, everyone benefits. Community leaders were called upon to raise funds from friends, family, neighbors, and businesses to distribute to local charities. They saw our island United Way as a link between Palm Beach County individuals in need and Palm Beach residents who care and have the means to help. For 75 years the Town of Palm Beach United Way has remained a volunteer-driven organization, led by community leaders who give generously of their time, talent, and money. It is this proud tradition of service that will continue to propel the Town of Palm Beach United Way for generations to come.

DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE

Social needs are not the result of a single condition, but more likely reflect a combination of conditions, each of which must be addressed to bring about positive, sustainable change. The Town of Palm Beach United Way has followed this principle throughout its 75-year history. We have supported a wide array of programs that have helped infants, students, mothers, veterans, seniors, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, the uninsured and so many others. We support nonprofit agencies that touch all sectors of social need in our community, from education and mental health to homelessness and food insecurity. We create positive community impact by working together with nonprofits, businesses, and individuals to offer comprehensive social services that help the entire community, not just one person or cause.
1940s
The name Community Chest was widely used for United Way organizations during the early 1900s. The nation’s first Community Chest was started in 1913 in Cleveland, Ohio where leaders developed a program for raising and allocating funds. Over the next four decades Community Chests began to spread nationwide, including Palm Beach County.

“Everybody Gives...Everybody Benefits” was one of the earliest slogans used by Community Chests to demonstrate the collective impact donors can make on their communities. Today, United Way still follows that basic principle – the entire community working together to advance the common good.
COMMUNITY CHEST

On March 30, 1945, a group of Palm Beach residents voted to separate from the Community Chest of the Palm Beaches and run their own Community Chest. On April 27, 1945, the Palm Beach Community Chest, Inc. was officially incorporated. By-laws were enacted that are still valid today, including that annual elections be held in April and that board meetings be scheduled from November to April. Noted society architect Marion Sims Wyeth was named as chairman of the executive committee, which was called to act on matters that came up outside of season.

The objective of the organization was set forth “to assist and harmonize the work of civic, character building, charitable and philanthropic organizations of and in the vicinity of Palm Beach.”

“With the war coming to an end and with no one knowing what conditions will be like during the next few years, we must have strong backing and strong thinking. We wish to co-operate with West Palm Beach, but with things rather tumultuous, we should have control over the various agencies and organizations that spring up.”

James T. Roche
Chairman of the committee named to organize the new Palm Beach Community Chest.
In 1945, the Town of Palm Beach United Way, then known as the Community Chest, solicited funds to distribute to 12 agencies plus The National War Fund. The National War Fund was created in 1943 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to allow every American a chance to donate towards wartime needs. The fund raised money to support the welfare of U.S. fighting forces and overseas humanitarian efforts.

The 1945-1946 campaign raised $70,575 from 737 subscriptions as reported in The Palm Beach Post on Wednesday, April 3, 1946.
Funds raised during the annual campaign were distributed to nonprofits throughout the surrounding area. Several Palm Beach County nonprofits that were member agencies in the 1940s still receive funding today, including Opportunity, Inc. During its early years, Opportunity used Community Chest dollars to run small homes and day nurseries for African-American children.

This has been called a year of decision for the world. It is also a year of decision for the Community Chest. We can capitalize in part on the gains made during the war and direct them toward better Palm Beach sister communities.”

—Armory L. Haskell and William L. Schultz
1947 Campaign Co-Chairmen
COMMUNITY CHEST REPORTS

As these reports show, many of the agencies during the 1940s carried out missions related to health and welfare.
1950s
The Palm Beach Community Chest experienced significant growth in the 1950s, in terms of dollars raised, board leadership and volunteer participation.

“Every One’s Best Will Fill the Chest” was the campaign slogan for 1952. The focus continued to be on health, youth development and family welfare.

Chairman C. Markham Langham leads a board of trustees meeting at the Palm Beach Community Chest headquarters at 273 South County Road in Palm Beach. Mr. Langham was the longest serving Chairman of the Board, beginning in 1953 and ending in 1966.
In 1954, Campaign Chairman Jessie L. Terry set the fundraising goal at $80,000. Each year, the bar continued to be set a little higher. During this time period, primary fundraising for the Palm Beach Community Chest was limited to just a few weeks, usually beginning and ending in February.
During the 1956-1957 fundraising cycle, led by devoted volunteers who would often go door-to-door soliciting funds, the Palm Beach Community Chest reached its first $100,000 campaign.
During this decade, campaign volunteers became crucial to the success of the organization. New fundraising divisions and special committees were formed to increase donor giving.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD SOLICITATION DIVISION

The Neighborhood Solicitation Division separated into teams based on the town’s layout and focused on door-to-door fundraising.

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Special Events Committee organized a yearly tag day benefit at the Palm Beach Golf Club where members collected special subscriptions from spectators.
SPECIAL BENEFIT COMMITTEE

The Special Benefit Committee held an annual dinner dance at the Palm Beach Country Club. Funds raised from the dance accounted for about 25 percent of the campaign goal.

SPECIAL GIFTS DIVISION

The Special Gifts Division oversaw securing individual donations from Palm Beach donors. Their efforts accounted for more than half of the total dollars raised. Division chairmen provided regular updates on campaign fundraising progress.
1960s
In the 1960s, the Palm Beach Community Chest’s annual fundraising campaign began to be known as the “Red Feather Campaign.” A red feather campaign board was displayed near Town Hall in Palm Beach and regular red feather ads were run in the local newspaper. The campaign goal continued to increase each year. Funds raised during the campaign were allocated entirely to local service agencies. No funds were used to support state or national organizations, a policy that still holds true today.
Film benefits were organized throughout the 1960s to raise money for the Palm Beach Community Chest. Films were often shown at the Colony Theatre followed by parties at the Pancake Palace. Pictured below are Chest volunteers posing with actress Faye Emerson who appeared in “The Matchmaker” at the Royal Poinciana Playhouse in 1963. Luncheons and tea parties also became common fundraising tools.
“I have long been aware of the splendid services rendered to the Palm Beach Community by the twelve agencies supported by the chest.”

— John F. Kennedy
United States President

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy praised the Palm Beach Community Chest in a letter to C. Markham Langham, president of the Chest. The Kennedy family owned a home in Palm Beach, which became the winter White House once John F. Kennedy was elected president.
COMMUNITY CHEST GROWTH

As the Palm Beach population increased, so did the Community Chest fundraising goals, leading the organization to separate its Special Gifts section into Division A and Division B. A Ladies’ Committee and a Palm Beach Country Club committee were added as well. The Palm Beach Country Club remains a significant contributor, with its members generously giving $1,500 or more annually to the campaign.

Community Chest staff and volunteers are shown here in their new headquarters at 350 South County Road in Palm Beach.
Community Chest funds benefited 14 agencies throughout much of the 1960s. But, with the population of Palm Beach County increasing each year, more and more service agencies were in need of Community Chest aid. And in 1969, the Palm Beach Community Chest was able to add four new agencies.
1970s
The Palm Beach Community Chest experienced organizational stability and increased volunteer engagement in the 1970s.

Frances Watkins was executive director of the Palm Beach Community Chest throughout the 1970s. She served in the role for 14 years and was employed by the organization for 23 years. Here she is seen reviewing agency funding requests with the Chest’s Budget Committee.
George W. Hersey, a prominent Palm Beach attorney and judge, was elected president in 1971 and served 8 years, the second longest tenure in Palm Beach Community Chest history. Here he poses in front of the Red Feather goal meter.

Under Hersey’s leadership, 17 charities received Community Chest funding.
Volunteer fundraising committees continued to be vital to the success of the Palm Beach Community Chest. During this time the organization had at least 250 volunteers.

“Never before have I come in contact with so many generous people who often volunteer to contribute long before being asked. Recently we conducted a tour of our agencies. It was an experience that makes a long and lasting impression. It makes one realize that every contribution is much needed and put to the greatest possible use.”

— Karl Oskar Gren
Community Chest Campaign Chairman
Volunteers were in charge of preparing newsletters to send to Palm Beach residents. Large-scale mailings were important in helping the Palm Beach Community Chest spread its mission and solicit funds. Town-wide mailings are still vital today.
A focus on personal touch, through phone calls, letters, and handwritten notes, was crucial to fundraising. It’s a quality that the Town of Palm Beach United Way still values today.

“The best way to get contributions is quite simply friend to friend. With very few exceptions, personal contact is the best method.”

George Hersey
Palm Beach Community Chest President
1980s
In 1984, following a national movement to use a consistent name, the Palm Beach Community Chest added United Way to its name.
The number of volunteer workers and partner agencies increased throughout the 1980s. At least eight organizations were added as partner agencies, including several that focused on drug treatment and rehabilitation.
In 1987, United Way of America celebrated its centennial anniversary. President Ronald Reagan recognized the occasion with a proclamation thanking United Way volunteers for a century of service.

SECOND CENTURY INITIATIVE

As part of United Way “Second Century Initiative” the Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way developed a five-year plan to double the organization’s financial resources, double the number of volunteer workers and increase the number of agencies by 1991. President Doyle Rogers had this message for residents and businesses:

The mission of the Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way is to help people, communitywide, improve their quality of life. This mission is accomplished through a united effort of caring citizens and human service agencies, based on volunteerism. The new national theme, ‘United Way – It Brings Out The Best In All Of Us,’ says that United Way is more than just a way to give, it is a way to care.”
LEADERSHIP GIVING

To help accomplish this goal of increasing financial resources, the Palm Beach Chest/United Way decided to add membership societies to recognize high-level giving. In 1987, the organization established the Red Feather Society. Helen Messic was founder and first chair of the society. Membership is for donors who give $1,000 or more annually.

“We are endeavoring to refocus on the donors on the island. We want to make it more personal, get commitments through understanding, and to do that we must involve the donors.”

— Helen Messic
Founder and Chair of the Red Feather Society
The Alexis de Tocqueville Society was established in 1988 with Pat and Ned Cook serving as its first chairmen. The Tocqueville Society recognizes exceptional community leaders who donate $10,000 or more annually to the campaign.

**ORIGINAL FOUNDING MEMBERS**

- Ann and Nathan Appleman
- Miren and Willis du Pont
- Joan and Murray Goodman
- Betty and Francis Guyott
- Leni and Peter May
- Claudia and Nelson Peltz
1990s
An Era of Milestones.

The Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way reached several milestones in the 1990s, including celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1995.

The organization added to the Tocqueville Society in the 1990s by incorporating the annual Alexis de Tocqueville Distinguished Citizen Award, the organization’s highest volunteer honor.
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY

The Alexis de Tocqueville Society continued to expand throughout the 1990s. Palm Beach led the nation in per-capita United Way giving and received several fundraising awards from the United Way of America.

In 1991, the elite “La Societe Nationale” was established for people who donate $100,000 to $250,000 annually. Betty and Francis Guyott became its first members.

Tocqueville giving was boosted by several substantial challenge grants, including $500,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Ruth and Ed Hennessy, past chairmen of the Tocqueville Society, contributed $1 million to the Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way Endowment Fund, helping cover administrative and fundraising costs so the organization could become self-sufficient.
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE
DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN
AWARD

The Distinguished Citizen Award was added in 1990. The award is presented annually to an individual or couple who embody the American spirit of giving and volunteerism witnessed by Alexis de Tocqueville as he traveled the United States in the mid 1800s.

Nate Appleman received the award in 1992 followed by his wife, Ann, two years later.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE AWARD WINNERS

1990 - Doyle Rogers
1991 - Frances Hufty
1992 - Nate Appleman
1993 - John Brogan
1994 - Ann Appleman
1995 - Alex Dreyfoos
1996 - Edward Cook
1997 - Sidney Kohl
1998 - Helen Cluett
1999 - Mary Alice Fortin
2000 - Christine Curtis
2001 - Anita Michaels
2002 - Gene Ribakoff
2003 - Paul Leone
2004 - Nicki and J. Ira Harris
2005 - Ruth and Carl Shapiro
2006 - Bob and Mary Montgomery
2007 - Ruth and Edward Hennessy
2008 - Daniel Ponton
2009 - Sydelle Meyer
2010 - Marjorie Fisher
2011 - Lesly Smith
2012 - Stanley Rumbough
2013 - Bud Tamarkin
2014 - Patricia L. Cook
2015 - Danielle Hickox Moore
2016 - Tom Quick
2017 - Michele Kessler
2018 - Jana and John Scarpa
2019 – Norma and Bill Tiefel
In 1993, the campaign raised more than $1 million for the first time ever. By the end of the decade fundraising totals doubled to more than $2 million.
In the 1990s, the annual campaign kicked off with a Residential Luncheon. Past speakers include Ambassador Nancy Brinker, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and Cliff Robertson.
The Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way again changed its name in 2006, this time to Town of Palm Beach United Way. This followed the national trend of Community Chests unifying behind the United Way brand.

The new Town of Palm Beach United Way logo featured a “helping hand,” under a rainbow, with symbolized humanity at the center.

During the 2000s, the Town of Palm Beach United Way started using the national “Live United” motto. “Live United” speaks to the core of United Way’s philosophy. It’s the directive to work together to improve the common good within our community.

Live United.
Led by leadership givers, campaign fundraising hit new highs during the 2000s. Several Palm Beach couples made significant contributions throughout the decade. In 2002, annual giving reached $3 million and in 2007 totaled over $4 million.

**MAJOR DONORS IN THE 2000s INCLUDED**

- Ann Appleman
- Christine and Alan Curtis
- Christina Dennis
- Marjorie S. Fisher
- Mary Alice Fortin
- Peggy and Richard Greenfield
- Nicki and J. Ira Harris
- Ruth and Ed Hennessy
- J.M. Rubin Foundation
- Carole and Barry Kaye
- Michele and Howard Kessler
- Dorothy and Sidney Kohl
- Pat and Howard Lester
- Danielle Hickox Moore
- Gail and Melvin Nessel
- Stephanie and Eugene Ribakoff
- Jana and John Scarpa
- Ruth and Carl Shapiro
- Lesly S. Smith
- Christine and Bob Stiller
- Jack Taylor
- Susan Taylor
In 2002, longtime volunteer Nettie Finkle spoke at the Palm Beach Community Chest/United Way’s annual Residential Luncheon. Finkle was beloved by the Palm Beach community and spent 75 years helping those less fortunate through her exceptional leadership, generosity and integrity. A year later, former Mayor Lesly Smith and former Board Chairman Paul Leone announced the establishment of the Nettie Finkle Award. It is awarded each year in her honor to an outstanding community volunteer whose work embodies the standards set by Nettie.

**NETTIE FINKLE AWARD WINNERS**

- 2003 - Dan and Jacquie Shorter, Daily Bread Food Bank
- 2004 - Richard Friedkin, Alpert Jewish Family Service
- 2005 - Edith Bush, Literacy Coalition
- 2006 - Margaret Meisels, Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse
- 2007 - Danielle A. Hickox, The Arc of Palm Beach County
- 2008 - Cheryl Crowley, Literacy Coalition
- 2009 - Melvin Lazerick, Big Brothers Big Sisters
- 2010 - Betty Bell, Families First
- 2011 - Wallace Turner, Boys and Girls Clubs
- 2012 - Nancy Edwards, C.R.O.S. Ministries
- 2013 - Marion Stratton, Opportunity, Inc.
- 2014 - Michael Gauger, Families First
- 2015 - Nathan “Nat” Price, 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
- 2016 - Dale Bruhn, Alzheimer’s Community Care
- 2017 - Tammy Culmer, Take Stock in Children
- 2019 - Linda King, 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
IN GOOD COMPANY

The Town of Palm Beach United Way’s Business and Professional Committee was active throughout the 2000s. The Business and Professional Campaign collects corporate gifts and employee donations from businesses in Palm Beach, South Palm Beach and Manalapan.

Over the years, several Palm Beach business professionals have served on the Town of Palm Beach United Way’s Board of Trustees and various committees.

The Breakers Palm Beach has been a contributor for 30 years and donated over $2 million to the Town of Palm Beach United Way. Paul Leone, President of The Breakers, has served the Town of Palm Beach United Way in a variety of roles, including Chairman of the Business and Professional Committee and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Publix is United Way’s No. 1 Global Corporate Leader. Each year Publix and its employees donate thousands to the Town of Palm Beach United Way’s Annual Campaign. Much of the funds come from employee payroll deductions, demonstrating each workers extraordinary commitment to making a difference in their local communities.
LOYAL CONTRIBUTORS

By 2009, the campaign received more than 1,500 individual donations each year. Hundreds of Palm Beach families have been loyal contributors to the Town of Palm Beach United Way for decades.

By the end of the decade, donations to the United Way helped fund 46 organizations that provided a variety of social services to Palm Beach County.

TURKEY Trot

The inaugural Turkey Trot race took place in 2009 and had a few dozen participants. It now has 1,400 participants and has become a Thanksgiving Day tradition in Palm Beach. It is organized by the Islanders Committee, a group of young professionals looking to make a difference in the community. Proceeds from the race help provide meals to families in need.
2010s
Continued Growth and Giving.

The campaign hit a new milestone, raising over $5 million in 2012. The United Way surpassed the $5 million mark four times in the decade.

In the 2010s, the Business and Professional Breakfast was the event that kick started the Town of Palm Beach United Way campaign. Each year, 1,400 employees and 100 companies give to the campaign.

Two new collection drives were created in the 2010s, the Boxed for Success School Supply Drive and the Empty Your Pantry Food Drive. The Holiday Toy Drive had already been established for several years.
The Town of Palm Beach United Way broke campaign fundraising records several times throughout the 2010s. Since 1945, the organization has raised over $116 million for the needs of Palm Beach County.
Several new partner agencies were added in the 2010s. The locations of the new agencies spanned across Palm Beach County, from Jupiter to Belle Glade to Boca Raton. As many as 50 organizations have been partners at one time.

NEW PARTNERS
2010 – The Arc of the Glades
2010 – Urban Youth Impact
2011 – The Glades Initiative
2012 – Clinics Can Help
2013 – Achievement Centers for Children and Families
2013 – El Sol, Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center
2014 – Center for Child Counseling
2014 – Palm Beach County Food Bank
2015 – Genesis Community Health
2018 – American Association of Caregiving Youth
ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

As the number of Town of Palm Beach United Way partner agencies increased, so did the number of volunteers on the Allocation Committee.

The allocation process is the cornerstone of the Town of Palm Beach United Way. The Allocation Committee consists of diverse community volunteers who serve as the eyes and ears of thousands of donors. Each year, allocation volunteers are charged with reviewing grant applications and making funding recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Volunteers spend months examining applications, analyzing financial data, visiting partner agencies, interviewing agency staff and board members, and assessing community needs. The process ensures accountability for all agencies receiving Town of Palm Beach United Way funds.
HIGH MARKS FOR GROWTH & DIVERSITY

The Town of Palm Beach United Way employed 4 full-time staff for most of the decade. President and CEO Beth Walton received the Palm Beach Civic Association’s Bill Brooks Community Service Award in 2017 for her leadership and dedication to the community. Walton has served the United Way since 1995 and has been CEO since 2009. Under her leadership, the organization has consistently received high marks from charity rating organizations such as GuideStar and Charity Navigator.