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Town of Palm Beach United Way Allocation Committee volunteers celebrate end of grant review process

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Allocation Committee volunteers celebrated the end of the Town of Palm Beach United Way's grant review process at a cocktail party on Tuesday, April 21, at the Palm Beach home of **Natalie Emerson**.

This year's committee consisted of a record 150 community volunteers divided into 15 teams (roster attached). They were responsible for reviewing 78 program applications from 41 nonprofit agencies in Palm Beach County seeking grant funding from the Town of Palm Beach United Way. **Suzanne Brenner, Carla Cove** and **Diane McNeal** served as General Chairs of the Allocation Committee. Team Chairs were **Missy Agnello, Diana Barrett, Jay Boodheshwar, Natalie Emerson, Sandy Fleming, Jay Hibbard, Fran Levy, Pamela McIver, Amber McMichael, David Scaff, Louise Snyder, Lauren Sterlacci, Jessica Surovek, Cornie Thornburgh** and **Betsy Turner**.

"Serving on the Allocation Committee is a profound privilege and an absolute joy," said Emerson. "It is incredibly inspiring to learn about our community's needs, hear what our nonprofit partners are doing to address these needs, and see firsthand how donor dollars make a measurable difference. As a team chair this year, guiding our community volunteers and watching them experience this meaningful process for the first time was an absolute highlight."

Allocation Committee volunteers read program funding requests from area charities, analyze financial data, review policies and procedures, meet with agency staff and board members, deliberate as a team, and ultimately make funding recommendations to the United Way Board of Trustees. Their recommendations will be voted on by the Board of Trustees at the Town of Palm Beach United Way's Annual Meeting on April 28 at The Breakers. Once approved, funding will be awarded monthly from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

"This year's record volunteer participation speaks volumes about how strongly United Way supporters want to engage in the grantmaking process and better understand the impact of their generosity," said Cove. "Few organizations offer this level of direct involvement, where volunteers play such an important role in evaluating programs and shaping funding decisions. It is both enlightening and deeply fulfilling."

This year the Allocation Committee is recommending the Town of Palm Beach United Way invest \$4,737,420 to support 73 high-impact programs across 38 local nonprofit agencies. This represents an increase of just under 10% in funding compared to grants distributed last year.

Programs reviewed support early childhood education, after-school enrichment, mentoring, tutoring, literacy, college preparation, career readiness, access to healthcare, counseling, behavioral therapy, day programs for seniors, substance abuse treatment, independent living for individuals with developmental disabilities, financial education, job training and placement, affordable housing, emergency shelter, food assistance, homelessness prevention, aid for survivors of domestic abuse, and much more.

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“It is incredibly rewarding to watch the full cycle of our campaign come together,” said Richard Rothschild, Board Chair. “After such an outstanding year of fundraising, seeing those resources directed to programs that serve our community is especially meaningful. This process reflects a true collective effort, and our donors can feel confident that their support is being put to work thoughtfully and effectively.”

Since the Allocation Committee review process began in 1945, more than \$100 million has been invested in programs that build strong educational foundations for children, create healthy communities, lift families out of poverty, and improve the quality of life for residents in Palm Beach County.

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