



Town of Palm Beach United Way thanks volunteers, celebrates end of grant review process during appreciation event

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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 Thursday, April 11, at the oceanfront home of **Melissa and John Ceriale**.

This year's committee consisted of 130 community volunteers divided into 15 teams (roster attached). They were responsible for reviewing 77 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, Tish Carlo, Sandy Fleming, MM Lang, Fran Levy, Steve Magowan, Pamela McIver, Amber McMichael, Joyce Reingold, David Scaff, Louise Snyder, Jessica Surovek, John Tatoes, and Betsy Turner**.

"This was my first year serving on the Allocation Committee for the Town of Palm Beach United Way, and it was an unforgettable experience," said Melissa Ceriale, whose team was tasked with reviewing mental health funding. "I learned so much about the mental health needs of our community, what nonprofits exist to help meet these needs, and how our donor dollars are invested into programs that truly make a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need. It's such an eye-opening and rewarding opportunity."

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 May 2 at The Breakers. Once approved, funding will be awarded monthly from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

"The level of commitment and effort our committee members bring to the grant review process is truly amazing," said McNeal, who oversaw teams focused on education. "The recommendations for funding our Allocation Committee volunteers make are based on significant due diligence; they ensure United Way funds are well invested."

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.

"It's an amazing experience to be able to see firsthand how your donation makes a difference in someone's life," said **Bill Tiefel**, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "It's also a remarkable feeling to know that when you give to our local United Way, you know with complete confidence that your donation is well-invested into programs improving lives and making Palm Beach County a stronger, healthier, community."

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.

-end-

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