Advancing the common good

We all have a stake in creating a healthy and prosperous community. That’s why at United Way of Miami-Dade we’re working to advance the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. It takes all of us working together to create a community in which we can all succeed.

Education – helping children and youth achieve their potential

Education is the cornerstone of individual and community success and at the heart of our work in this area is the United Way Center for Excellence in Education. The Center, an innovative learning, teaching and training initiative dedicated to elevating the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade County and beyond, continues to grow and expand its national and international attention for groundbreaking initiatives in education.

In recognition of its excellence, last fall the Center’s Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade, received the prestigious APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment) accreditation. In addition, the Center, through a grant from the Early Learning Coalition, worked with 15 early childhood centers to help them earn APPLE accreditation. This year, the June Center, the received five stars from the Early Learning Coalition’s five-star quality rating improvement system (QRS). The Early Learning Coalition also named the Center as its QRS training agency. During the past year, the Center provided training for 5,000 adults including early childhood educators, early childhood college students, business leaders and parents who in turn influence 80,000 young children. The Center hosted several conferences, bringing together national and international early childhood professionals. HighScope, one of the nation’s leading early education curriculums that models the Center, selected United Way as its site for an international conference. In collaboration with United Way Worldwide, early childhood representatives from United Way in 12 Latin American countries came together at the first regional meeting of the Latin American Early Childhood Development Initiative to learn the best ways to implement early childhood curricula in their respective countries. The Center also hosted Harvard’s Project Zero team for five days.

Our early education efforts also include free or low-cost tutoring to young children, professional development for teachers, and parent education classes. Nearly 25,000 older adults and their caregivers received services through United Way-funded programs ranging from in-home health care, to hot meals, to physical fitness, language and arts classes, to health screenings, to respite care.

Another 13,000 children and adults received life-saving communications and screenings for cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, breast and cervical cancer, diabetes and vision and hearing-related issues.

Other milestones in 2010-2011:

- Nearly 1 million residents received help last year from the agencies where United Way funds programs.
- As the economy slowly turned towards recovery, United Way supported community and other funders responded accordingly, opening their hearts to the tune of $54.1 million.
- Six of Miami-Dade’s top employers exceeded the million dollar fundraising landmark. The giving trend again was continued as the Miami-Dade County Public School system where students, employees and organizing units at Miami-Dade Community College contributed a total of $1.7 million.
- Contributing more than $5 million among the private sector were Florida Power & Light, Publix Super Markets, Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd., and University of Miami.
- The Johns and Elaine Kasnas Family Foundation supported the United Way Million Dollar Challenge. It became the largest individual unrestricted gift of the year. The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, once again the newest members to the United Way Million Dollar Club.
- United Way exceeded the goal of 626 members, including 87 Million Dollar Club members and ten Five Million Dollar Roundtable members. Our Loyalty Society has grown to 817 members, representing individuals who have been giving for 10 years or more, continuing to grow with more than 26,000 members, contributing more than $16 million annually.
- United Way’s charity cruise aboard Royal Caribbean International’s Allure of the Seas brought together nearly 2,300 community and business leaders and raised more than $52 million for the United Ways in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.
- Of that, $100 million was awarded to nearly 13,000 students improve their math, science and literacy skills and prepared tests. In one program alone, 85% of the students improved their GMR from the previous school year.
- At the same time, we focused on funding programs that engaged more than 10,000 youth in positive after-school and summer activities to help them avoid gangs and risky behavior.
- The Center also hosted Harvard’s Project Zero team.
- Nearly 20% of Miami-Dade residents aged 60 years or older, providing for their health and well-being is a top concern.
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