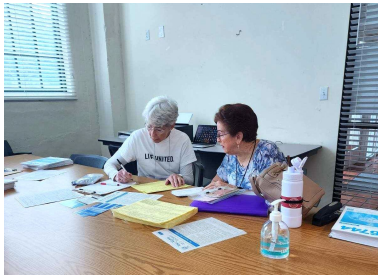


## February 2024 Newsletter

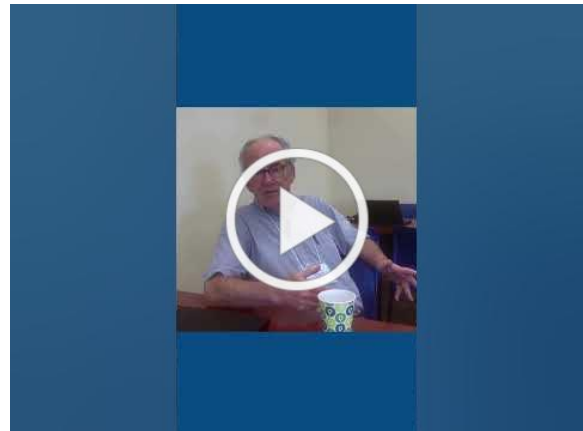
### Free Tax Help Available NOW!

United Way of Collier and the Keys' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is underway. If you'd like to schedule an appointment at our Naples office, discover dates and locations in Monroe County, or access informative flyers, please visit our [website](#) for all the details.



### Meet Leon Marten

Experience FREE tax preparation services by IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers. Leon Marten, a dedicated VITA volunteer in Naples, is entering his 7th year, aiming to save individuals more money. Marten emphasizes that self-prepared taxes can lead to costly mistakes, potentially shortchanging you thousands of dollars. His commitment is to assist people in optimizing their returns and ensuring financial accuracy.



## UWCK Updates

### National ALICE Summit

ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)

households grapple with impossible choices daily. Despite earning slightly above the Federal Poverty Level, these community members fall short of covering essential expenses.

Together, 41% of households in the U.S. are below the ALICE Threshold  
(poverty + ALICE divided by total households)

**In Florida, 45% of households face income challenges below the ALICE Threshold:**

**-36% in Collier County**

**-43% in Monroe County**



United Way of Collier and the Keys President and CEO, Tiffani Mensch, Vice President of Community Impact, Ashley Jones, and Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Spencer Smith, attended the National ALICE Summit in New Orleans, Louisiana, from January 29th to 31st.



UWCK President and CEO, Tiffani Mensch, attended Dona Ponepinto's session on 'Fundraising for ALICE.' Ponepinto serves as the President and CEO of the United Way of Pierce County, Washington.



Pictured from left to right are UWCK President and CEO, Tiffani Mensch; United Way of the Coastal Empire Vice President of Community Investments, Lauren Branson; UWCK Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Spencer Smith; and UWCK Vice President of Community Impact, Ashley Jones.



Ashley Jones, UWCK Vice President of Community Impact, is pictured with Gianetta Jones, Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer of Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, Inc.



Left: John Franklin  
Right: Tiki Barber

ALICE Conference attendees were enlightened by insights shared by former United Way of Northern New Jersey CEO, John Franklin. Throughout his 20-year career, Franklin not only initiated the ALICE project but also cultivated it into a dynamic multi-state grassroots movement. Presently, 650 United Ways across 21 states, along with corporations and foundations, work collaboratively to document financial needs and advocate for equity on behalf of ALICE.

The conference also featured an engaging address from emcee and ALICE advocate, former NFL player Tiki Barber.

For a deeper understanding of ALICE in Florida, including insights from Monroe County Sheriff Rick Ramsay on housing challenges, head [here](#).

## Unsung Hero



On February 2nd, Mindy McKenzie, Vice Chair of the UWCK LAB, received prestigious recognition as an "Unsung Hero" from the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys. Mindy's unwavering dedication and remarkable accomplishments were celebrated, shining a light on her invaluable contributions.



# Garden Party in Red

American Red Cross  
Greater Miami & The Keys  
"Mission Moment"

UWCK was awarded a generous grant from the American Red Cross, enabling the hiring of the sole full-time disaster case manager in Monroe County. This crucial support has empowered UWCK to provide ongoing assistance to more than 200 residents of Key West and Stock Island in their recovery from Hurricane Ian.

Highlighting this significant endeavor, UWCK's Disaster Case Manager, Tiffany Pellicier, was featured as the "Mission Moment" speaker on February 3rd, passionately sharing insights into the impactful work being done.



## UWCK Calendar

Feb. 9	Feb. 9	Feb. 11
CCPS hockey night with proceeds from ticket sales benefitting UWCK	Southernmost Sports Chiropractic party with proceeds benefitting UWCK	National 211 Day
<a href="#">Buy tickets here</a>	<a href="#">Learn more</a>	<a href="#">211 resources</a>

## Save the Date!

The 2024 Sunshine Ace Hardware Big Green EGGfest is right around the corner! At EGGfest, barbecue-lovers and chefs compete to be number one, while supporting local charities. This year, UWCK is thankful to be one of the beneficiaries. The event features live music, all-you-can-eat samples, and more!

Purchase your tickets and support UWCK [here!](#)

Sunshine Ace Hardware  
**EGGFest 2024**

Riverside Park  
Bonita Springs

Saturday,  
April  
13th

with proceeds benefitting

United Way  
United Way of  
Collier and the Keys



Donate

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