

September 2024 Newsletter

Two Years After Hurricane Ian: A Story of Resilience

As we approach the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Ian, we're reminded of the strength and resilience of survivors like Greg and Gretchen Saunders.



Living in Naples, Greg cares for his mother Gretchen, who is battling cancer.

They had experienced hurricanes before, but nothing like Ian.

"It happened so fast... the water was just gushing into the house.

For three days, we were walking in water up to our knees," Greg shared.

Through it all, the Saunders stayed strong. With help from UWCK and other agencies, their home was renovated, allowing them to return to a sense of normalcy.

"I'm grateful that I have a roof over my head because

I know there's a lot of people that don't," Gretchen reflected.



Kitchen before



Kitchen after

Their story is one of perseverance, love, and community support
—values that continue to inspire all of us.

HURRICANE IAN DISASTER STATISTICS

Direct Assistance	\$1,753,951.80
Interviews	19,762
Referrals Made	1,425
People Helped	13,960

Support Our Disaster Resiliency Fund

Help UWCK provide immediate relief and long-term recovery after storms. Your donation strengthens our community's resilience this hurricane season and beyond.

To hear more Hurricane Ian recovery stories, check out our [YouTube page](#). You can also find hurricane season resources [here](#).

Hurricane Ian: Vendor Appreciation



UWCK recently hosted a Vendor Appreciation Event to recognize the incredible vendors who helped our communities rebuild.

A heartfelt thank you to Paradise Coast Builders Inc., ZERPA Maintenance and Service, and R&J Martinez Services for your tireless efforts in helping local families.



Community Champion Award



Ashley Jones, UWCK's Vice President of Community Impact, was recently recognized with the Community Champion Award at Collier County's inaugural Emergency Readiness Summit. Her dedication, especially during and after Hurricane Ian, has made a lasting impact on our community.

2024 Publix Campaign



Celebrating Publix and United Way's 45-Year Partnership

UWCK staff, board members, and partner agencies recently visited Publix stores across Collier and Monroe counties to celebrate the 2024 Publix campaign and the incredible generosity of Publix associates. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Publix and United Way partnership!

Deadline Approaching for UWCK Marine Science Education Grant!

The application process for the annual UWCK Marine Science Education Grant is now open.

Now in its fourth year, UWCK's five-year commitment aims to provide \$180,000 to schools and educational facilities throughout the Keys.

In the 2023-2024 cycle, a total of \$41,729 was awarded to 17 recipients.

The annual Marine Science Education Grant program is part of UWCK's commitment to creating the next generation of reef stewards, in partnership with the United Arab Emirates.

Grants of up to \$2,500 are available per application for Monroe County School District schools and Monroe County-based marine science nonprofit education centers or organizations. Additionally, up to \$500 per application is available for Monroe County licensed childcare facilities and preschools.

**Applications are due
by September 30th!**



**Apply
Now!**

Tiffani Mensch Named Top Nonprofit Executive



United Way of Collier and the Keys President and CEO Tiffani Mensch has been recognized as one of Southwest Florida's Top 30 Nonprofit Executives of 2024!

Her tireless dedication and passion for leading UWCK has earned her this well-deserved honor.

Read more about this recognition [here](#).

VITA Volunteers Needed



WE NEED YOU!

Why Should You Become a VITA Volunteer? Here Are 5 Reasons:

- Your VITA site is close to home.
- Days, evenings, & Saturday volunteer hours are available.
- No experience needed! You will receive specialized training to become IRS-certified.
- Tax professionals can earn continuing education credits.
- Volunteers of all ages & skills, including those fluent in other languages, are welcome.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Reviewer:** Have an eye for detail? As a Reviewer, you'll ensure tax returns are accurate & complete, giving clients peace of mind. It's a rewarding way to put your skills to good use!
- **Site Coordinator:** Lead & inspire as the backbone of our VITA site! You'll manage volunteers & ensure everything runs smoothly, gaining leadership skills while making a real impact.

- **Greeter:** Be the welcoming face for our clients! As a greeter, you'll help them feel comfortable & prepared, while ensuring everything runs smoothly. It's a great way to connect with your community!
- **Preparer:** As a Tax Preparer, you'll help clients with their taxes, impacting their financial well-being while gaining valuable skills & becoming a trusted community resource.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING OR NEED MORE INFORMATION?

EMAIL: VITA@UWCOLLIERKEYS.ORG
OR CAROLINA.HEISER@UWCOLLIERKEYS.ORG
PHONE: 305.563.1470



uwcollierkeys.org/vita

Making Connections

You're Invited to Join Women United!

We had an amazing time at Bad Ass Coffee of Hawaii connecting with incredible women to discuss the launch of Women United! This group harnesses the power of women to make a real impact in our community,

using their passion, skills, and resources to create lasting change.

We're looking for champions ready to strengthen our community and make a difference.

Interested in joining? Visit our [website](#) to fill out the form and don't miss our **Pre-Kickoff Event** on **October 10th!**



WOMEN UNITED[®]

JOIN US!

**LEADING THE CHARGE
INSPIRING THE CHANGE**

UWCOLLIERKEYS.ORG

United Way
United Way of
Collier and the Keys

INSPIRE

NETWORK

VOLUNTEER

COLLABORATE



Record-Breaking Beach Cleanup!

Nearly 100 volunteers participated in a beach cleanup at Naples Pier, hosted by The Healthy Earth Org and supported by United Way of Collier and the Keys. This event saw the highest attendance ever for a beach cleanup, resulting in the collection of 148 pounds of debris. Thank you to everyone who made this success possible!



Thank You for Supporting Dolly Parton's Imagination Library!

Thanks to everyone who supported our Dolly Parton's Imagination Library event—we raised \$1,498! Big shoutout to Hard Rock Key West for hosting and to Jordan Upchurch for emceeing in fabulous Dolly fashion!



Another Successful Florida Keys Nonprofit Day!

On September 11th, professionals from charitable organizations across Monroe County gathered for the third annual Florida Keys Nonprofit Day.

Presented by the Florida Keys Funders Alliance—comprising the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys, Ocean Reef Community Foundation, and United Way of Collier and the Keys—the event featured sessions on presentations, branding, and finance, culminating in a reception sponsored by First State Bank of the Florida Keys.

Women of Steel Conference

UWCK Vice President of Philanthropy Brittini Brown, along with Board Members Janet Pogar and Nancy Limb, recently attended the Women of Steel conference. A big thank you to Florida Blue for the invite! The conference focused on leadership, empowerment, and finance.



Grace Place Visit



UWCK President and CEO Tiffani Mensch and VP of Philanthropy Brittini Brown recently visited Grace Place to see the fantastic improvements to the Bright Beginnings playground, made possible by UWCK funding.

Updates include a resurfaced trike track, and new additions like a balance beam, art easel, and discovery center.

UWCK Board Retreat

UWCK staff and Board Members participated in a productive Board Retreat on September 12th and 13th in Weston, FL. The agenda included a strategic framework discussion, team-building activities, and more during the first in-person board meeting since the pandemic.



Save the Date

Women United Pre-Kickoff

United Way of Collier and the Keys is thrilled to invite you to our Women United Pre-Kickoff Event! Join us to learn about what's in store for Women United and discover ways you can get involved. Feel free to bring a friend or share our invite with anyone interested in learning more about Women United.

When:

October 10th
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Where:
Fifth Third Bank
2100 Tamiami Trail N, Naples, FL 34102

[Register](#)

Andy Griffiths' Retirement Party

When:
October 12th
5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Where:
Beachside Key West
3841 N Roosevelt Blvd, Key West, FL 33040

[Purchase Tickets or Become a Sponsor](#)

Andy Griffiths'

Retirement Celebration and Fundraising Event
to benefit United Way of Collier and the Keys

GONE FISHING

Beachside Key West

10.12.24



VISIT UWCOLLIERKEYS.ORG TO PURCHASE
TICKETS OR BECOME A SPONSOR!

TICKETS ON SALE UNTIL OCTOBER 4TH!

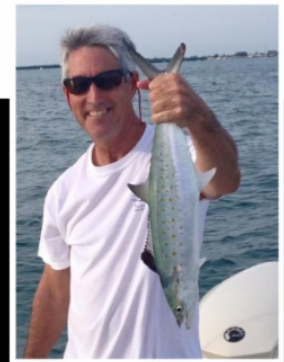
Join us in celebrating Andy Griffiths, Monroe County's
longest-serving elected official, as he retires after
32 years on the Monroe County School Board!

DINE. DRINK. DANCE. LAUGH.

5:30pm-6:30pm: **cocktail hour on the veranda**

6:30pm-7:30pm: **dinner, featuring entertainment
by comedian Stephanie Kaple**

7:30pm-9:30pm: **music and dancing with
Miami's Premier DJ Cardi**



The event will benefit UWCK's Success by 6 program, which
provides preschool scholarships to local children in need.

With 43% of Monroe families living paycheck-to-paycheck, this
program is crucial for early education. Proceeds will be matched
1:1 with state funds, aiming to double the number of Keys children
enrolled in the program.

Don't miss this opportunity to honor Andy and support a vital cause!

Donate

Visit our
Website



United Way of Collier and the Keys | 9015 Strada Stell Ct, Ste 204 | Naples, FL 34109 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!