

Contact:

Brandyn Moore-Rodriguez (210) 352-7077; cell: (210) 204-9277, bmoore-rodriguez@unitedwaysatx.org

***New Community Champions Spirit of SA Awards to Honor
the Caring Efforts of Local Volunteers during COVID-19***

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS (September 21, 2020) – The Volunteer Center of United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County announces its first-ever *Community Champions Spirit of SA Awards* program and is accepting nominations from the public through Oct. 16.

The awards will recognize individuals whose volunteer efforts have made a significant impact during the COVID-19 crisis, demonstrating above-and-beyond commitment in any one of United Way’s four strategic areas of work.

Recognizing the top 10 video nominations, United Way will showcase the winning volunteers at a virtual YouTube event on Dec. 3 and will also introduce a public voting option via social media.

To help produce the final video presentation for the online event, United Way has partnered with Brackenridge High School (SAISD) Communications Arts High School (NISD) media classes.

“Volunteers from across San Antonio have responded to the COVID-19 crisis by offering compassion, support and resources to address the new and urgent needs of our community,” said Chris Martin, president and CEO of United Way.

“Thanks to the outstanding efforts from countless volunteers, we have seen so many do so much. And now it’s our turn to honor their outstanding commitment through the Community Champions Spirit of SA Awards program.”

The awards recognize volunteers who have made a difference in four key priority areas for community improvement. United Way's four Impact Councils focus on collective impact, bringing together groups of partners from different sectors to work on a common agenda for solving specific social problems and using a structured form of collaboration.:

- * **United Way's Ready Children Impact Council** ensures all children grow up in safe, stable and nurturing environments, are healthy in mind, body and spirit and are ready to enter kindergarten and succeed in school.
- * **United Way's Successful Students Impact Council** ensures all young people are actively engaged in their communities, prepared for the 21st Century workforce and have resource-rich environments with prepared and engaged adults to support them in reaching their full potential.
- * **United Way's Strong Individuals and Families Impact Council** ensures all individuals and families are stable, flourish economically, reach their full potential and maintain a quality of life free of discrimination.
- * **United Way's Safety Net Impact Council** supports short-term emergency and disaster assistance to help stabilize individuals and families, meeting their most immediate needs.

"Everyone is invested in making things better, especially for the most vulnerable, as we navigate this crisis together," said Laura Vaccaro, Volunteer Center Chair and Valero Vice President of Community Investment and Engagement. "We have seen volunteers open their hearts and step forward with time, donations, and kind deeds to help others. We're humbled to host the Community Champions Spirit of SA Awards to shine the light on the selflessness of volunteers."

"People hurt. People need services. People need people who care. That's why volunteers are community champions," Vaccaro said.

To nominate a Community Champion, submit an application and video by clicking [here](#). For additional information, visit <https://www.unitedwaysatx.org/community-champions/> call (210) 352-7077 or email volcenter@unitedwaysatx.org.

About The Volunteer Center at United Way: Responding to a changing community, The Volunteer Center at United Way is engaging volunteers for a variety of community projects during the current pandemic. The Center also coordinates community-wide efforts, including the Shoebox Project, Write Start Project, Born Learning Trails, Literacy Kits and many other initiatives. Supporting the Raul Jimenez Thanksgiving Dinner, H-E-B Annual Feast of Sharing, and Martin Luther King Day, the Center also deploys volunteers during natural disasters (hurricanes, floods, fires) and to support hundreds of non-profit and civic events during the year.

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