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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Pam El to headline United Way
Women’s Leadership Council *Power of the Purse* Luncheon**
NBA, WNBA, and NBA Development League global marketing expert to address local philanthropists

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – (May 18, 2017) – Pam El, the first African American and first female to serve as executive vice president and chief marketing officer for the NBA, WNBA, and NBA Development League, was the keynote speaker at the United Way Women’s Leadership Council (WLC) *Power of the Purse* Luncheon [presented by the San Antonio Stars](#) on Thursday, May 18, at Valero.

An industry leader for global marketing, El addressed a group of 400, translating the lessons she learned in the fast-moving, dynamic sports and entertainment environment to the ongoing challenges in one’s life, business and career.

With expertise in brand management, strategic marketing, creative development, media and sponsorships, El’s “*Go Find Your Passion*” message is a result of her love for the competitiveness of the game, the admiration of the league’s world-class teams and its passionate global fan base.

“We are so honored for Pam to travel to San Antonio to share her inspiring message with us,” said Laura Vaccaro, WLC chair and vice president of events and community relations for Valero. “She is a shining example of how women across America are supercharging their performances in today’s competitive business world while caring for others through commitment and philanthropy.”

The WLC *Power of the Purse* event celebrated the combined philanthropy that is changing thousands of lives across Bexar County. In the last 17 years, United Way’s Women’s Leadership Council has invested over \$41.3 million to bring strength and independence to San Antonio women, children and families.

Last year alone, over 3,100 WLC members opened their purses contributing a record-breaking \$4.2 million.

The lunch event benefitted the Women's Leadership Council's Signature Cause Childcare Scholarships. Childcare is a major factor impeding many parents with children at home from completing a college degree or vocational training.

"In many homes across Bexar County, women's empowerment remains a pipedream," Vaccaro said. "Too many women, and men, are missing out on the opportunity to get an education and the tools they need to support themselves, their children, and their families.

Last year, the WLC awarded 54 childcare scholarships through its signature cause, providing childcare assistance to 69 children and their parents who are pursuing financial stability through higher education and/or full-time job training. Recipients are able to continue their education and feel confident that their children are receiving affordable, quality childcare.

"We are proud to share that seven of our childcare scholarship beneficiaries graduated in 2016, one of whom has since been accepted to dental school," said Vaccaro.

Scholarship recipient Isabel Pina provided a heartfelt testimonial, saying, "I'm a single mother whose dreams were always bigger than her head. Being a woman in the STEM field is not an easy task, but it is attainable, and that's what I hope to infuse into my 15-month-old daughter's development. I hope to inspire her, and other girls, to believe that girls can dream big, too!"

Pina continued, "It's just me and my daughter. WLC unselfishly provided us the opportunity to advance. WLC supported this girl's dream, and I will forever be grateful."

In support of the childcare scholarships, over 70 donated purses were purchased by attendees as part of a silent auction, in addition to a purse raffle.

Hosted by Valero, *Power of the Purse* was presented by the San Antonio Stars, the city's WNBA team. The Stars celebrate 15 years in San Antonio during the 2017 season and have advanced to the WNBA Playoffs in seven of the past 14 seasons.

Other sponsors include: Valero Energy Foundation, CPS Energy, CST Brands, H-E-B, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, NuStar Energy, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Principle Auto Group, Silver Eagle Distributors, SSFCU, SWBC and UT Health San Antonio.

About The San Antonio Stars:

The [San Antonio Stars](#) are one of five professional sports franchises owned and operated by Spurs Sports & Entertainment, along with the San Antonio Spurs (NBA), the Rampage (AHL), San Antonio FC (USL) and the Austin Spurs (NBA Development League). The 2017 season marks the team's 15th year in San Antonio, as the Utah Starzz relocated to the Alamo City in 2003. In operation since 1997, the WNBA - which features 12 teams - is the most successful women's professional team sports league in the world.

About United Way:

United Way is the largest private investor in health and human services programs in San Antonio and Bexar County. United Way invests in 69 partner agencies and 137 programs that save lives, change lives, and improve our community. There is a focus on 1) preparing children for school and life, 2) helping students graduate and succeed, and 3) providing the tools to support strong individuals and families. For more information, visit www.unitedwaysatx.org or call (210) 352-7000.

About the Women's Leadership Council:

The United Way [Women's Leadership Council \(WLC\)](#) mobilizes women who strengthen our community by investing in and promoting programs that positively impact our community's children, families and future. This year, the group will change its name to [Women United](#) to reflect a global, growing force of 70,000+ women dedicated to creating a world of opportunity for everyone.