



**United Way of
Indian River County**

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For Immediate Release

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February 16, 2010

Media Release

**United Way of Indian River County's Foundation &
Indian River County Pair Up to Aid
Homebound Seniors in Gifford**

*\$43,669 Grant to help Senior Resource Association purchase
vehicle to deliver hot & cold meals to homebound seniors*

Vero Beach, FL: United Way of Indian River County's Foundation, in partnership with Indian River County and the County Commission, today announced a grant of \$43,669 to the Senior Resource Association to ensure a Meals on Wheels route that currently provides daily food delivery to homebound seniors in Gifford isn't discontinued.

The grant will be used to purchase a vehicle critical in ensuring hot meals and cold food items can safely be delivered to the Meals on Wheels clients who rely so heavily on the program. Without the purchase of this vehicle, meal delivery would have ceased and the Senior Resource Association would have been forced to scale back, delivering frozen meals once a week to this vulnerable population.

Meals on Wheels, part of a larger program called Nutrition for Life, includes the delivery of hot, nutritious, noon-time meals and a daily "wellness check" to homebound seniors who are unable to shop for food and prepare meals themselves. Of the current 34

Meals on Wheels recipients in Gifford: 23 are women, 25 live alone, 32 are black, 2 are white, 2 are blind, 2 are bedbound and all 34 are homebound.

“The entire purpose of the Nutrition for Life Program is to keep seniors healthy, informed, engaged with others and provide the necessary supports to keep them in their homes and communities for as long as possible,” stated Senior Resource Association Executive Director Karen Deigl. The Nutrition for Life Program serves 240 daily hot meals and serves 150 congregate meals. There are 16 Meals on Wheels routes in the county with 173 volunteers.

“For many of these seniors, the Meals on Wheels driver is the only person they see or speak to each day. Some of the Gifford residents served do not even have phones,” said Deigl.

In addition to saving this daily route for Meals on Wheels, the purchase of the vehicle allows Senior Resource Association the capability of expanding the route. “We can now serve more clients in a greater geographic spread,” added Deigl. Adding an additional route to Wabasso is in the plans.

“There is no greater use of our resources than to serve this most vulnerable population,” said United Way Board Chair Michael Kmetz. “The United Way Foundation was designed to provide for exactly this kind of need in our community – grants that represent the ability to serve our county and have long term lasting impact for our residents.”

“It is vital that basic services to our seniors are maintained and expanded,” said County Administrator Joe Baird on behalf of the County Commission. “This grant is a great way to ensure we take care of our most needy residents.”

Foundation Provides Needed Funds

The \$21,834.50 grant represents a commitment from the United Way Board of Directors to addressing the economic hardships of so many right here in Indian River County. The United Way Foundation was founded in 1992 and is the planned giving arm of the United Way of Indian River County. Separate from our annual campaign, the Foundation makes grant awards to meet emerging or emergency needs, provides funding for capital projects that enhance delivery of services or special community projects. Currently, the Foundation has received gifts from more than 165 donors.

“The Foundation of the United Way of Indian River County represents the commitment of so many in our community to make lasting changes in the lives of those we serve. I know I speak for everyone involved when we say that we are proud to participate in such an endeavor. Making sure our seniors are cared for is essential in these harsh economic times,” said Michelle Malyn, Director of Gift Planning for the United Way Foundation, “all while sustaining United Way’s work in the community for years to come.”