

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Adds Drive-Thru Tax Event, More Carroll County Sites

(Canton, OH) March 13, 2018 – United Way of Greater Stark County’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is adding more services to help local residents take advantage of their tax return filing services.

The demand for VITA services has increased every year in Stark and Carroll Counties. The program started the 2017 tax season with 9 clinics at the Carroll County Public Library, and all appointments have been filled. 3 additional tax clinics were added to accommodate more residents in need of free income tax assistance, and these slots are filling up quickly.

“We’re not even halfway through tax season, and we’ve already scheduled almost 120 appointments in Carroll County,” says Chrisann Leaman, Manager of United Way of Greater Stark County’s Financial Prosperity Center at OhioMeansJobs. “These refunds amount to a significant amount of money coming back to the community.”

Another solution to the increased demand for VITA services is a “Take Your Taxes for a Ride” drive-thru tax filing event scheduled for Saturday, March 24th at The Financial Prosperity Center at OhioMeansJobs in Canton from 10AM – 3PM. Tax payers will be able to drop off their tax return information without leaving their vehicles. Tax returns will be processed by March 28th when clients can pick-up their returns and other paperwork. Finnegan the VITA mascot will be on hand at the event and staff will hand out goody bags to attendees. Some of the goody bags will contain tickets that entitle the bearer to a candy tower or gift certificate.

“We couldn’t be happier to see so many people taking advantage of the free VITA services,” says VITA Site Coordinator Tami Stephens. “The drive-thru event will allow us to accommodate more people, and the chance of winning a prize will make it fun for everyone who participates.”

United Way of Greater Stark County’s VITA service was named “Ohio Benefit Bank Site of the Year” by the Ohio Association of Food Banks for the past 3 years. VITA was also voted one of the top three tax services in Stark County in The Canton Repository’s Readers’ Choice Awards for the past 2 years.

“Every year our VITA services bring more money in refunds to people in the community.” says UWGSC President and CEO Maria Heege. “This is a boost to the taxpayers’ households, and to the local economy.”

VITA volunteers receive specialized training from the Internal Revenue Service, resulting in a high accuracy rate. They use their expertise to help clients navigate new tax rules and identify credits or deductions that are often overlooked. VITA also helps people avoid the high cost of paid preparers and predatory lenders. Those filing with direct deposit can typically expect a refund in 7-10 days.

Visit www.uwstark.org/freetax or call 330-994-VITA to schedule an appointment for FREE tax filing. The call center is available Monday-Thursday, 10AM -5PM. Tax clinics are scheduled at multiple locations throughout tax season. An IRS-compliant drop-off service is available at UWGSC's offices in downtown Canton through April 12th, 10:30AM – 5:30PM for taxpayers who are unable to schedule in-person assistance or attend the Drive-N-Drop event.

About United Way

United Way of Greater Stark County fights for the Health, Education and Financial Stability of every person in every community. The agency collaborates, convenes, and partners to support programs and initiatives that break the cycle of poverty, promote a healthy community where children are successful from kindergarten through graduation to a career, and where families have the tools, skills, and support they need to become financially independent. We win by living United. For more information about United Way of Greater Stark County visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. (330) 491-0445.

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