

NEWS RELEASE

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**United Way  
of Greater Stark County**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Free Tax Assistance Available from United Way of Greater Stark County; Volunteer Preparers Needed for New Location**

(Canton, OH – January 17, 2016) Volunteers are needed to help in the upcoming tax season through the United Way of Greater Stark County's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. *No experience is necessary.* Individuals receive training and IRS Certification appropriate for their volunteer position. They also receive materials for self-study on basic income tax law for federal and state returns. In addition, several specific training sessions will take place prior to the kick-off of tax season. Volunteers are covered under the Volunteer Protection Act and are not accountable for tax returns filed to the IRS.

"This is a great way for individuals to gain tax knowledge while helping families in Stark and Carroll Counties," said Chrisann Leaman, VITA & MyBudgetCoach Coordinator, United Way of Greater Stark County. "Many volunteers have gone on to find a job doing taxes. With what this program brings back to the community, it is time well-spent."

Tax clinics will be held at multiple locations throughout Stark and Carroll Counties, giving volunteer tax preparers many opportunities to participate. This upcoming season, VITA will offer multiple clinics at each of the following locations: Carroll County District Library, Massillon Public Library, Rodman Library (Alliance), Massillon Salvation Army, Stark State College, United Way of Greater Stark County and Walsh University. An additional clinic location has been added to the new Financial Prosperity Center at Ohio Means Jobs on 30<sup>th</sup> Street NW in Canton. The clinics will run January 23, 2017 to April 17, 2017, open 11AM – 6PM and only accept clients who have scheduled appointments.

In 2016, United Way of Greater Stark County's VITA program and its volunteers helped income tax clients in local communities collect over \$2.4 million in tax credits and refunds. Local volunteers donated 1,810 hours of their time and helped complete 3,550 Federal and State returns. In addition - since the VITA tax preparation service is free - local residents saved \$400,500 in filing fees.

"We are looking forward to another busy tax season," said Robin Seemann, Income Impact Council Director of United Way of Greater Stark County. "VITA brought a large amount of money back into the community last year, stimulating the local economy. Oftentimes, we find tax credits that have been overlooked by other tax assistance programs. We get clients their maximum refund in a minimal amount of time."

United Way of Greater Stark County was named VITA "Site of the Year" for 3 consecutive years (2014-2015-2016) by the Ohio Benefit Bank Association, and voted one of the top three tax services in Stark County in the Canton Repository's Readers' Choice Awards.

Anyone interested in volunteering should complete the online VITA volunteer registration form at [uwstark.org/freetax](http://uwstark.org/freetax) or contact **Chrisann Leaman**, VITA & MyBudgetCoach™ Coordinator at **330-491-9989** or [chrisann.leaman@uwstark.org](mailto:chrisann.leaman@uwstark.org).

**About United Way**

United Way of Greater Stark County improves the quality of lives through long-lasting local community change, supporting programs in education, income and health. The agency collaborates, convenes, and partners to support programs and initiatives that promote a healthy community where children are successful from kindergarten through graduation to a career, break the cycle of poverty so families have the tools, skills, and support they need to become financially independent and access to programs & services that improve the overall health of Stark County. For more information about United Way of Greater Stark County, visit [www.uwstark.org](http://www.uwstark.org). Headquarters are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. Dial (330) 491-0445 to reach the offices.

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