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## Orange County United Way Announces Major New Partnership in Fight Against Childhood Obesity

*Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana, Child Guidance Center, Kid Healthy, Latino Health Access and Serving Kids Hope Named Recipients of United Way Grants to educate Orange County residents about healthy lifestyles*

IRVINE, CA – Orange County United Way recently announced the launch of a community-wide partnership to battle childhood obesity in Orange County.

As a key component of the organization's FACE 2024 community-wide action plan, the ultimate goal of the effort is to increase the number of healthy youth in Orange County by one-third, as measured by childhood obesity rates.

United Way will partner with five local non-profit organizations to help implement the program, all of which have demonstrated success in fighting childhood obesity: **Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana, Child Guidance Center, Kid Healthy, Latino Health Access** and **Serving Kids Hope**. The five partnering organizations were selected following a highly competitive RFP process that began September 15, 2014.

During the process, 40 organizations applied for funding, which is made available by thousands of donor contributions to United Way's Community Impact Fund, which fuels FACE 2024. All organizations and programs that receive support are vetted through a rigorous evaluation process whereby volunteers including members of United Way's Health Strategic Planning Committee, Board of Directors and Community Impact Cabinet, assisted by United Way staff, assess organizational capacity, program outcomes, service quality and accessibility to target populations most in need of support. United Way imposes standard outcomes and performance measurements that are tracked and reported back to United Way throughout the funding cycle.

"We're please to work with these organizations that share our mission and have demonstrated the expertise necessary to reduce childhood obesity rates in some of Orange County's most impacted communities," announced Orange County United Way President and CEO Max Gardner.

Each organization will be granted between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year for two years (\$800,000 in total, beginning January 2015) to develop or expand multi-faceted, comprehensive services, including family mealtime coaching, physical activities, nutrition education and healthy cooking classes/demonstrations.

The timing for the launch of United Way's Health/Childhood Obesity Prevention effort comes at a critical time for local youth. According to the 2014 Orange County Community Indicators Report, an average of 38.6 percent of Orange County students in the grades tested had

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unhealthy body compositions. What's worse, studies show, those who are obese as adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming obese adults.

"Early education is key," explained Michelle Burroughs, Director of Health and Evaluation for Orange County United Way. "Through comprehensive outreach and education focused on healthy eating and increased physical activity, along with parental and community engagement, we can ensure that the next generation of young adults lead healthier, more active lives."

Leaders in the organizations participating in the program understand first-hand the challenges associated with battling obesity and are uniquely positioned to tackle them head-on.

"With fewer physical education opportunities in the schools and limited green space in our neighborhoods, we recognize the importance of our role in promoting healthy lifestyles and fighting obesity," said Robert Santana, Chief Executive Officer at the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Ana. "We appreciate the opportunity to partner with United Way in the fight against childhood obesity."

"I'm absolutely confident that by partnering with these five organizations that bring expertise and strong connections within the communities they serve, we will quickly move the needle, we will see more Orange County residents leading healthier lives and we will meet our 10-year Health goal," concluded Burroughs.

To learn more about Health/Childhood Obesity Grant Awards or the FACE 2024 community-wide action plan, please visit the [Orange County United Way website](#).

**ABOUT ORANGE COUNTY UNITED WAY:**

Since 1924, Orange County United Way has been working to improve lives and strengthen our community by mobilizing the caring power of Orange County, by focusing on the building blocks for a good quality of life: Education, Income, Health and Housing. By investing in Orange County's children, families and individuals, we help them create pathways to self-sufficient futures through education and training. In short, we help people help themselves. Through our 10-year community-wide action plan "FACE 2024" (an acronym for Fund, Advocate, Collaborate, Educate), United Way is mobilizing local businesses, community organizations, governmental agencies and individuals to make a long-term measurable difference in the lives of local individuals and families. To learn more or to join our movement, visit [www.unitedwayoc.org](http://www.unitedwayoc.org).

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