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School-Based SparkPoint OC Financial Empowerment Centers Offer Much-Needed Support Services for Low-Income Anaheim Families

Doors open for two financial education and resource centers, key elements in United Way's FACE 2024 plan for reducing the number of financially insecure local families

IRVINE, CA (November 17, 2014) – Today Orange County United Way launched two new SparkPoint OC financial education and resource centers that will benefit low-income families in Anaheim. The new SparkPoint OC Centers located at Horace Mann Elementary School in the Anaheim City School District and Jonas Salk Elementary School in the Magnolia School District, will provide critical financial coaching and case management for local families.

“Our goal is to break the cycle of poverty in Orange County and one of the best ways to do this is by equipping families with financial education tools,” said Max Gardner, Orange County United Way’s President and CEO. “By providing convenient resources in school settings, we’re creating a shorter path to access for one-on-one counseling, free tax preparation, housing issues, healthcare and educational services. By adding SparkPoint OC centers to school environments, we’re helping to ensure children can remain in the same schools rather than moving from school to school. This model helps to create a more settled home environment, and ultimately improve children’s educational outcomes.”

The Siemer Institute for Family Stability and JP Morgan Chase Co. are the key sponsors of moving the SparkPoint OC model into the school environment. SparkPoint OC offers personalized programs to boost credit, increase income and build assets. Parents can connect to a personal coach who helps create step-by-step financial plans for their family.

Dignitaries in attendance at the events included Magnolia and Anaheim City district superintendents, school principals, board members, representatives from Housing Opportunities Collaborative, NeighborWorks OC, Abrazar, Inc., the program operators, California Assemblyman Tom Daly’s office presented a proclamation. Also on hand were families eager to sign up for the much-anticipated services. “We are thrilled to offer the array of services for our families. Our goal is to help students succeed academically and socially -- and they can’t do that if they have to move from school to school,” remarked Dr. Amada Segovia Hale, Principal for Horace Mann Elementary School.

“SparkPoint OC has had a tremendous impact on local families for nearly four years. It’s very powerful when you see families reduce their debt, increase assets and advance their careers. Recently one of the program participants was able to make her family’s dream of owning a home a reality,” said Carla Vargas, Senior Vice President of Community Impact at United Way. “When we provide tools that families need, they not only use them to increase their self-sufficiency, but they are forging better futures for their children.”

SparkPoint OC is a critical strategy of the FACE 2024 community-wide action plan, introduced in as a long-term, comprehensive effort to ensure that every child in Orange County has access to the building blocks for a good quality of life: Education, Income, Health and Housing.

To learn more about SparkPoint OC Centers or the FACE 2024 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 initiative "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).