



Courtesy photo

Pictured are United Way Board Members at the 2020 Awards Ceremony on March 5. From left are Larry C. Gonzalez, PlainsCapital Bank; Lee Jones, AEP Texas; Dr. Priscilla Canales, Weslaco ISD; Tyler Stone, Mayfair/RIOCO; Blanca I. Villalobos, IBC Bank; Edna Garcia, Security Service FCU; Michelle Quiroz, Reserva Coffee Roasters; Lisa Killion; Paola E. Castillo, Frost Bank; Gerardo Paz, South Texas FCU; and D'uAndre Drain, GE Aviation. The entire UW Board of Directors thanks Wells Fargo, the Truist Foundation and H-E-B for their contributions to United Way's COVID-19 Community Fund.

United Way of South Texas opens a COVID-19 Community Fund, lead gift from Wells Fargo

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

The United Way of South Texas Board is committed to responding to the emerging social service needs related to COVID-19. Circumstances are dynamic and changing rapidly, but United Way and its partners continue to work to ensure that essential services, such as food, shelter, utilities and information referrals are available. United Way of South Texas is proud to partner with the Wells Fargo Foundation, the Truist Foundation, and H-E-B to launch a Community Fund specifically for partners who are responding to COVID-19 basic needs. Collectively, these very generous corporations and United Way have invested \$60,000 to the fund. This Fund will allow individuals and corporations to make a gift at one location. United Way will then utilize its proven accountability tools to invest in the most effective programs.

"It's important in times of community need that we all work together," said

Alma Ortega Johnson, Region Bank President for South Texas and El Paso. "We're grateful for the leadership of the United Way of South Texas for its ability to act quickly in caring for our local residents. We hope our support provides a measure of relief as we stand with the community during this challenging situation."

Due to COVID-19, United Way of South Texas and its partner agencies are using creative methods to reach clients. The following are some examples of the free services available: Boys and Girls Clubs are providing Drive-Up food distribution for school-aged youth and their families. In addition, they are offering an educational virtual experience for club members. Hidalgo Youth Center is providing Grab and Go Meals from 8 a.m. to noon. The Salvation Army has closed their family thrift store; however, they continue to provide shelter, Grab and Go Meals, and rental assistance to qualifying families via phone interview. Palmer Drug Abuse

Program continues to offer counselling via phone to individuals struggling with addiction and substance abuse. Our partner agencies still play an essential part in assisting their clients and the community, and they are adjusting hours of operations as more information about COVID-19 is being released. Although the United Way of South Texas is not working from its office until completion of the shelter-at-home order, the organization continues to help its partner agencies during this time.

Donations to the COVID-19 Community Fund will be used to provide financial support for Hidalgo and Starr County non-profits working with individuals affected by this pandemic. The United Way of South Texas encourages individuals seeking any assistance (rent, utility, food pantries, senior shopping hours, etc.) to call 2-1-1 or visit <https://www.211texas.org/> for available resources in our community. Resource information is continuously being updated.