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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RAPPAHANNOCK UNITED WAY HELPS INDIVIDUALS SAVE MONEY DURING 2016 TAX SEASON

May 26, 2016 – Fredericksburg, VA – For Spotsylvania resident John Powell, deciding where to get his taxes done this year was easy, although he had concerns about how the Affordable Care Act would impact him.

“It was a big relief off my mind,” said Powell, who came to one of Rappahannock United Way’s Free Tax Sites for the second year in a row and had his taxes prepared free of charge. “With the Marketplace involved, I didn’t know what my taxes would be. The volunteers make sure people’s taxes are filed correctly. These people know what they’re talking about. That’s a big plus in my book.”

Powell and more than 1,900 other people had their tax returns filed for free at Rappahannock United Way during the 2016 tax season. Anyone with a household income of \$62,000 or less was eligible for the free service at various tax site locations across the Fredericksburg region. These families and individuals were able to collectively save \$385,200 in tax preparation fees and had a total of \$1.9 million in refunds. Over 500 of these individuals also opted to receive free financial coaching from Rappahannock United Way to help them with budgeting, saving and improving their credit scores.

Why does Rappahannock United Way offer free tax preparation, along with financial coaching? It’s an essential tool in helping more households in our community emerge from poverty and achieve greater financial stability, which is the goal of Rappahannock United Way.

“The tax program is an essential piece of a bigger picture,” said Adrienne Ross, Financial Stability Manager at Rappahannock United Way. “Not only can we encourage people to make good financial decisions like paying down debt and building savings with their tax refunds, but we can also help connect them to other services in our community as they strive to become financially stable.”

Rappahannock United Way's free tax preparation and financial coaching services wouldn't be possible without the help of local IRS-certified volunteers.

Over 100 different individuals contributed 1,872 volunteer hours to the program during the 2016 tax season. Their services are valued at over \$45,096.

"Our tax volunteers are absolutely amazing," said Rappahannock United Way's Terri Center, who coordinates all the tax volunteers. "We are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of tax volunteers who are not only professional, knowledgeable and friendly, but have a true desire to help others in our community. They are incredible!"

Rappahannock United Way is always looking for additional tax volunteers. No experience is necessary and full training is provided. To find out more about volunteering or about the tax program, visit www.RUWFreeTaxes.org.

About Rappahannock United Way

Founded in 1939, Rappahannock United Way is a local nonprofit organization serving Fredericksburg, Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Our mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community. Our goal is to have more households emerge from poverty and achieve greater financial stability. Together, we can create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.

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