

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\$1.7 MILLION RETURNED TO THE COMMUNITY AS THE FREE TAX PREPARATION PROGRAM COMES TO A CLOSE.**

**Fredericksburg, VA, April 29, 2014 -**

During the 2014 tax season over \$260,600 in Tax preparation fees stayed in the pockets of 1,300 local individuals and families due to the efforts of Rappahannock United Way's Free Tax Program and the support of over 100 local volunteers and 1,600 volunteer hours. The program focused on providing free tax preparation for individuals who make \$58,000 a year or less. The effect on the community is huge - \$1.7 million in tax credits and refunds. These refunds help individuals and families pay bills, build savings, and pay down debt and, in some cases, even attain their dreams of higher education.

Here's the breakdown.

- 1,300 + Federal Tax Returns were filed.
- \$260,600 in Tax preparation fees saved
- \$1.7 Million in Federal Refunds.
- 244 of Returns filed by individuals using MyFreeTaxes and Intuit's Financial Freedom Edition of TurboTax.
- 63 individuals put all or part of their Tax Refund into Savings which worked out to be over \$96,000.

*"I've always been scared to do my Taxes" said Tasha, a 26 year old single mother of two. "I know that sounds dumb, but I think it's a real anxiety for a lot of people. It's like you get all these forms and rules and no one to ask question to if you get stuck. Having someone help me through the process is a huge relief."*

Volunteer tax sites are part of the largest anti-poverty program in our nation, returning an estimated \$1 billion to low-to-moderate-income working families. With the goal of more households emerging from poverty and achieving greater financial stability, Rappahannock United Way organizes and trains volunteers to prepare – for free – taxes for community members.

In addition to providing Free Tax preparation services, many tax sites were also staffed with volunteer Financial Coaches, from local banks and credit unions, who provided clients with individual financial resources and guidance. These coaching sessions assist clients in creating a blueprint for budgeting, credit rebuilding, debt repayment and savings. This year 270 individuals met with a Financial Coach and of those 270 clients 126 were referred to other financial services and resources and 26 completed a personal financial action plan.

*“I was shocked when I found out how much I was spending on eating out at restaurants” said Tyler, a 29 year old local resident of Fredericksburg, after he completed a session with a Financial Coach. “I’m a single guy so I go out a lot. It seems a lot easier than cooking at home. I never understood where all my money was going and why I was coming up short when it was time to pay the rent. I know that 10 dollars here and 10 dollars there adds up, but I guess I just needed to see it on paper to have it sink in. The [Financial] coach showed me that by eating at home more often I could save almost \$350 a month. I’m going to put that money in the bank.”*

| You can learn more about the ways that RUW is having an impact in our community by logging on to [www.rappahannockunitedway.org](http://www.rappahannockunitedway.org)

**About Rappahannock United Way:** Founded in 1939, Rappahannock United Way is a local nonprofit organization serving the city of Fredericksburg, and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Rappahannock United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life—a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health. Our goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place.

We invite our community to be part of the change. Together, united, we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That’s what it means to LIVE UNITED.