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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Rappahannock United Way invests over \$1 million to change lives in our community**

July 19, 2016 – Fredericksburg, VA – Michele’s two youngest children loved “camping” with their mom.

Every night they’d get out their tent and hook it to their car. It really wasn’t camping, but Michele was trying her best to keep their spirits up despite becoming homeless after a divorce.

“It was a struggle,” said Michele, who has since made significant changes in her life. Thanks to several Rappahannock United Way funded programs, Michele now rents an apartment in King George, and she and her children are thriving. “I never thought I would be homeless. Every now and then when I got paid, I’d get a motel so we wouldn’t have to keep staying in the car. It was scary.”

In an effort to help more people like Michele in our community, Rappahannock United Way is investing \$1,015,750 in local programs for the 2016-17 funding year. For a complete list of Rappahannock United Way funded programs, go to <http://www.rappahannockunitedway.org/impact.html>.

These programs focus on the three building blocks of a good quality of life: Education, Income and Health.

“By focusing on vital programs in these areas, we’ll have a stronger community and stable, independent families,” said Janel Donohue, President of Rappahannock United Way.

“Rappahannock United Way is funding 37 different programs that will reach over 19,000 individuals in Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline and King George this year. We want to thank everyone who gave to Rappahannock United Way to make this happen! Together we are all part of the solution when it comes to impacting our community.”

How does Rappahannock United Way determine which programs will be funded each year? It's a process that involves over 50 community volunteers who serve as Citizen Reviewers to evaluate and prioritize each program being considered.

"Citizen Review gives donors a voice in funding decisions, which means that donations to Rappahannock United Way have the impact that our donors want to see," said Kathryn Palmer, Community Impact Manager at Rappahannock United Way. "The process ensures that Rappahannock United Way is transparent in our funding decisions. The process also gives individual volunteers the opportunity to see, first-hand, how local nonprofits are working together to address the root causes of poverty."

The programs that have been funded by Rappahannock United Way give people like Michele the tools they need to succeed.

"We are here for the people in our community to provide resources, to provide solutions and to help them reach their dreams and the outcomes that will change their lives," said Susan Coleman, Rappahannock United Way Board Member and Investment Committee Chairman.

### **About Rappahannock United Way**

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

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