



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Florida**

An Independent Licensee of the  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



**United Way  
of Northeast Florida**

For Immediate Release: May 2, 2003

Contact: Rick Curran, BCBSF

Phone: (904) 905-3408

Cell: (904) 386-3495

Or

Connie Hodges, United Way President

(904) 390-3218

## **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Announces New Community-Wide Strategy to Increase Philanthropy Through United Way of Northeast Florida**

**Jacksonville, Fla.** -- Today, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) announced the largest corporate gift ever given for the human service sector in northeast Florida. The \$500,000 challenge gift will impact health and human service programs across the five-county United Way of Northeast Florida service area. "I thank Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida for this incredible gift that will yield \$1,000,000 in new funding for health and human service programs in our community," said Bob Helms, Chairman-Elect of United Way's Board of Trustees. "This initiative will have a deep, far-reaching impact on the lives of north Florida citizens."

The unique program, called Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Community Care Challenge, will match first-time and increased leadership gifts (gifts of \$1,000 or more) as well as corporate gifts to United Way that meet the matching criteria.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chairman and CEO and 2003 United Way Campaign Chair Michael Cascone, Jr. explained, "Corporate gifts are critical in helping set the tone for giving in a community. We hope to cultivate new leadership givers and inspire current leadership givers to increase their level of support."

**(More)**

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Community Care Challenge is designed to leverage the corporation's \$500,000 gift to ultimately yield 1 million new dollars for health and human service programs in the First Coast region. The challenge gift will be used to match first-time leadership givers and new or increased corporate gifts. "We purposefully chose to invest with United Way of Northeast Florida as the best way to ensure the greatest, community wide impact of our gift," explained Cascone.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Community Care Challenge will develop new leadership givers (donors of \$1,000 or more), increase the level of giving among current leadership givers and provide incentives for increased corporate giving. The way the program works is that a donor's pledge of \$650 or greater would be matched through the BCBSF Community Care Challenge in the amount of the difference needed for the individual to qualify at the Silver level (\$1,000) of Leadership Circle giving. The following year, the donor would make the gift of \$1,000 on his/her own.

Current Leadership Circle givers in the Silver (\$1,000 - \$2,499) and Gold (\$2,500 - \$4,999) levels who increase their previous level of giving will receive a match in the amount of their increase from the BCBSF Challenge. Finally, a corporation that increases its corporate gift for the 2003 Campaign would receive a match in the amount of their increase from the BCBSF Challenge.

United Way of America reports that leadership giving is one of the fastest growing areas of funding for nonprofits. It estimates that leadership giving will comprise 50% of a community's total campaign in the future. United Way of Northeast Florida's percentage of leadership giving for 2002 was 29% of the community campaign, accounting for \$3.18 million of the \$19.8 million raised. In 2002 and the previous two years, BCBSF conducted the largest United Way campaign of any company in the region, raising more than \$1.4 million in employee and corporate contributions in 2002.

**(More)**

Cascone also introduced his 2003 United Way Campaign Cabinet of business and community leaders. Children and agency representatives from All Saints Early Learning & Community Care Center and Normandy Village United Methodist Child Care Center, United Way-supported programs, were on hand to say "thank you" to BCBSF officials gathered for the announcement. Officials representing BCBSF United Way campaign leadership from the past 10 years were recognized with personal thank you cards from the children for their part in helping build the BCBSF tradition of community caring.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is a leader in Florida's health industry. BCBSF and its subsidiaries serve more than 6 million people. Since 1944, the company has been dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of all those it serves by offering an array of choices. BCBSF is a private, policyholder-owned, tax-paying mutual company. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., BCBSF is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. For more information concerning BCBSF, please see its website at [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com).

#####

## **Towler, Susan**

---

**From:** Wildes, Susan  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2003 11:21 AM  
**To:** Smith, Darnell; James, Lamar; Lamb, Linda; Rogers, Reggie; McCabe, Patrick; Kammer, Randy; Haramboure, Diana; Hunter, Barbara; Lestage, M.D., Daniel; Orr, Kathy; Pizzo, David; Benevento, Anthony; Liptak, Walter; Myers, Gary; Kramzer, Joyce; Wallace, Jim; Johnson, Michael; Towler, Susan; Crozier, Janet; Rehfus, Melissa; Sharrett, Bill; Kaegi, John; Washington, Al; Broome, Michael  
**Cc:** Kelly, Catherine; Keck, Pam; Harms, Shirley; Jennings, Betsy  
**Subject:** United Way News Conference

On Friday, May 2, 10:30 a.m., BCBSF and the United Way of Northeast Florida will announce the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Community Care Challenge. This \$500,000 challenge gift from BCBSF will be used to match first-time and increased leadership gifts as well as corporate gifts to United Way of Northeast Florida.

We are inviting you to attend this news conference in DCC 101A/C. Children aged 3-5 from two United Way-funded child development programs will be at the news conference, presenting thank you notes to BCBSF United Way supporters. Please let me know if you can attend for this 30-minute session. The thank you notes will be personalized, and the children would love to present you with your thank you note.

Thank you for adding this to your already busy schedules.

-----  
**Susan F. Wildes**  
Senior Community Relations Consultant  
904/905-6137; fax 904/905-6638  
Susan.Wildes@BCBSFL.com