

Volunteers can help in many areas

Our region is fortunate to have an organization as hardworking, as gifted and as prudent as the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area.

The United Way has earned its reputation for community caring and fiscal responsibility.

The organization accomplishes its goals through a three-pronged approach:

- Operating its own community programs, such as the Laurence E. Richardson Day of Caring.
- Collaborating with other organizations, such as the Initiative for Effective Nonprofits, in mutual support for mutual goals.
- Providing financial grants to other, independent non-profits to boost their efforts at helping the community.

In the latter category, the United Way has just announced the award of more than half a million dollars to local nonprofits.

Volunteers spent four months carefully sifting through the applications in order to choose those programs with the greatest ability to improve the community and the best record of financial responsibility.

The grants are made in three categories, representing the target areas that the United Way hopes to impact: "Successful Kids in Strong Families," "Access to Health & Wellness" and "Achieving Self-Sufficiency." A total of 30 grants were awarded, amounting to \$585,000.

A handful of examples: after-school tutoring for at-risk children, Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries; counseling for abused children and non-abusing family members, Children, Youth & Family Services; year-round child care for children ages 4-12, the Nelson County YMCA; preventive health care for seniors and assistance for low-income housing residents who have chronic health conditions, the Jefferson Area Board for Aging; crisis intervention services for those who have experienced sexual abuse, the Sexual Assault Resource Agency; Disaster Services, American Red Cross Central Virginia Chapter; emergency shelter, transitional housing, child care, money management and life skills courses, the Salvation Army; vocational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, WorkSource Enterprises.

This is far from an exhaustive list, but it gives an idea of the scope of the United Way's work.

Congratulations to the programs selected for support, and thanks to the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area for providing that support. The community is richer because of this commitment.