

We are excited to get started on our 2022 Annual Campaign, and what a way to start than to celebrate the 40th birthday of our fearless leader, Michael. The celebration was held at Georgia Beer Company and lots of friends, family, coworkers, board members, and partner agencies showed up to wish Michael a happy birthday.



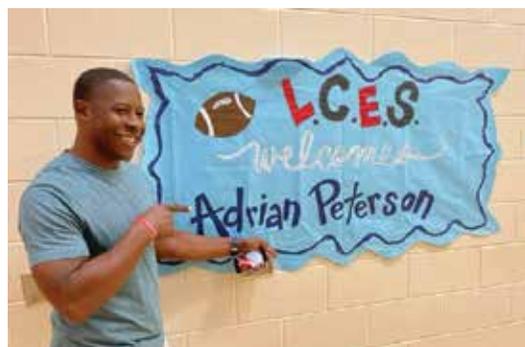
Along with the birthday festivities, Michael has been working hard to make sure GVUW does what it can to help better the lives of our communities. Earlier this year Michael created the Bruce Williams Impact Grant with funds that were donated to us by Mr. Bruce Williams estate. Mr. Williams was a long time supporter of Greater Valdosta United Way and loved giving back to the community. There was \$50,000 designated this year for the grant and \$49,916.79 has been given to partner agencies in the form of matching grants to offer support to their programs related to education, health, or financial stability for our communities. The grants that have been given out have been used to help purchase a Point of Care ultra sound and Tonometer, uniforms, a Hoyer lift and hospital bed, IT equipment, Christmas gifts and a Christmas experience for families in foster care, and sports equipment for children and adults with disabilities just to name a few.

As you may recall, GVUW was awarded a \$100,000 Mental Health Grant from Resilient Georgia, and we have continued to put it to good use. With the grant we have been able to assist with Mental Health trainings throughout Lowndes County, The Hope Box, books, feeding programs, and a PTSD program. The grant has also help sponsor community events, the first one being the 1st Annual Unite Dinner. The United Way and The Haven cohosted this dinner to bring awareness to dealing with mental health issues. The evening was a huge success with the help of guest speaker, Georgia Southern University Director of Student Affairs, Alumni, and NFL running back, Adrian Peterson. Mr. Peterson shared about his dealings with mental health issues that arose from dealing with a speech impediment and dealing with speaking to the press after making it to the NFL. He also spoke briefly about his mental state after the loss of his son, and how he overcame these obstacles.

GVUW also helped sponsor a Mental Health Awareness Food Truck Crawl in beautiful Downtown Valdosta. There were several food trucks and live music by Mainstream band. There were also several nonprofit agencies on hand help educate attendees about mental health and the resources available to help someone dealing with mental health issues. We invited Adrian Peterson back to tour and speak with youth about dealing with mental health. He visited the Youth Impact Center in Lakeland along with the Lanier County Elementary Schools, Valdosta VECA, and Cook County Boys and Girls Club.



Greater Valdosta United Way was invited to be a part of the Taste of Georgia hosted by the Azalea City Civic Club. The Taste of Georgia is an event ACCC holds each year to help raise funds for two local nonprofits. This year Greater Valdosta United Way was honored to be one of those recipients to the sum of \$13,5000. THANK YOU ACCC.



In September we had our official Campaign Kickoff with the Scott James Radio Show and the partner agencies. It was an early but fun morning and the agencies got to educate the listeners about the services their agencies provide for our area. They were also able to speak on behalf of the United Way and discuss the ways in which GVUW helps support their programs.



This was also the day our staff, partner agencies, and our board members began delivering campaign packets to local businesses. Packets were handed out throughout the following week. Many of the local businesses are Community Partners that participate in our annual campaign every year through employee payroll giving and corporate donations. For their continued support we would like to say THANK YOU to all of them. Without their support our partner agencies would not be able to provide the needed services and programs for our communities.



In October Michael spoke with Lowndes High School's FCA on the importance of community involvement and the power of volunteering. He reminded them that they were our future leaders and that what they do today can most definitely affect the future. We also had our Annual Day of Caring on October 15th and it was a beautiful day to give back to the community. We had more than 150 volunteers and 11 projects that were completed. The day kicked off with breakfast, a group picture of all the volunteers on the front steps of the old courthouse, and the Scott James Radio Show was

on hand to broadcast it all. The projects took place at The Haven, ACTO, Boys and Girls Club (Lake Laurie), Second Harvest, Children's Advocacy Center, Downtown Valdosta, YMCA, American Red Cross, Living Bridges Ministries, Humane Society and Greater Valdosta United Way. Projects included landscaping, painting, building a privacy fence, organizing, packing food boxes, and general cleaning. The Valdosta Daily Times and WALB were also on hand reporting on the projects at their locations. It was truly a great day of volunteering!

LIVE UNITED

Our 2021 -22 Goal:
\$1,000,000.00

Together we stand United to create strong communities made up of healthy children and families, thriving economic conditions, and good education options.

