

## H.O.P.E.S. Program Hosts Community Event To Engage Families

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Offering Early Support and Education Services, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas Program Aims to Proactively Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

DALLAS, Aug. 8, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- H.O.P.E.S., a new United Way of Metropolitan Dallas program providing support and education services to at-risk families, will host a community event to begin creating child-centered support systems for parents. The outreach effort will be held on Sunday, August 14 at Moises E. Molina High School, located at 2355 Duncanville Road in Dallas, from 1pm-4pm. The event will engage families in fun and meaningful activities, while introducing them to community resources they need to live healthy, productive lives.

The Texas Department of Health and Human Services recently awarded a \$3.4 million grant to United Way of Metropolitan Dallas to fund H.O.P.E.S. (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support). The program, in partnership with TexProtects and other non-profits, will increase protective factors for at-risk Dallas County families in order to effectively reduce the incidences of abuse and neglect.

"We expect this program to be a game changer, as we focus efforts on preventing rather than reacting to child abuse," said Susan Hoff, Chief Impact, Strategy and Operations Officer, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. "The first step is connecting parents with a much-needed support system and available resources. Every family needs a supportive and caring community in order to thrive."

The H.O.P.E.S. Family Community Event will feature entertainment for parents and children, including face painting, a petting zoo, free food and beverages, games and performances by the Dallas Mavs ManiAACs. United Way service providers and community partners will be on site to help educate families about the valuable resources available to them. Organizations represented will include AVANCE-Dallas, ChildCareGroup, Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, Family Compass and Family Care Connection. H.O.P.E.S. program services include parent-child early education programs, home visiting parenting programs, and programs connecting teenage mothers with health care resources.

The H.O.P.E.S. grant, United Way's largest to date, will develop and implement systems level, county-wide efforts aimed at increasing community awareness and outreach, coordinating and aligning child abuse and abuse service providers, and ensuring health care providers are trained to identify early signs of maltreatment. The project will also provide effective, evidence-based prevention programs for families in high need West Dallas neighborhoods.

H.O.P.E.S. is tapping into the vast network of North Texas stakeholders from school systems, health care, nonprofit, faith-based, and the public sectors, to help guide the project, developing common goals and coordinated interventions. Progress and outcome evaluation will be led by the **Institute for Urban Policy Research** at The University of Texas at Dallas.

The statistics in Texas are heartbreaking:

-- More than 3 children die from abuse or neglect every week;

-- 182 are confirmed victims daily; and

-- More than 7 are maltreated every hour.

Clearly, these children experience profound suffering--but child abuse impacts us all. Estimates from the federal Centers for Disease Control show that over Texas' victims' lifetimes, a year's worth of child abuse and neglect costs the state a staggering \$14.1 billion. Education and support for families are key solutions to ensure the health and well-being of our youngest and most vulnerable children.

"Child abuse and neglect are neither acceptable nor inevitable," said Hoff. "Every child deserves the opportunity to grow up in a safe and loving environment. Together, United Way, TexProtects and our partners are committed to turning 'HOPES' into reality."

To get involved or learn more, contact Jennifer Villarreal-Prudeaux, H.O.P.E.S. Program Manager, at [jprudeaux@unitedwaydallas.org](mailto:jprudeaux@unitedwaydallas.org) or 214-978-0094.

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas brings people together to improve lives and create lasting change here in North Texas by focusing on education, income, and health -- the building blocks for strong families and thriving communities. We galvanize and connect all sectors of society -- individuals, businesses, non-profits, and government -- to create long-term change through investing in solutions that produce healthy, well-educated and financially stable individuals and families. We raise, invest and leverage more than \$50 million annually in community-focused solutions serving Dallas, Collin, Rockwall and southern Denton counties. We do more than help one person beat the odds -- we are changing the odds for entire communities. To learn more, please visit [UnitedWayDallas.org](http://UnitedWayDallas.org).

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