



United Way of the Coastal Bend

United Way of the Coastal Bend
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**VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE SITES RETURN
MORE THAN \$1 MILLION TO COASTAL BEND RESIDENTS!**

United Way Partnering to Support Community in Tough Times

In 2002, United Way of the Coastal Bend was instrumental in the development of a coalition to establish free tax preparation sites in Corpus Christi and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program was created. Just seven short years later, in 2009, United Way, along with partners Del Mar College, Weed & Seed and SunTide Federal Credit Union, sponsored VITA sites at the Corpus Christi Housing Authority, Del Mar College, Timon's Ministries and SunTide Federal Credit Union locations. Their efforts returned more than \$1 million to Coastal Bend residents, including almost \$400,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits! Always a significant help with the confusing process of filing taxes and receiving all refunds due, the current economic climate made the need for this year's VITA program even more significant.

Operated exclusively through grants, donations and volunteers, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provided tax preparation and support to almost 1000 Coastal Bend residents. Dr. Valrie Chambers, Associate Professor of Accounting at Texas A & M Corpus Christi, strongly believes in the value of the program and encourages her students to volunteer. "The VITA program is beneficial to both the students and the community," says Chambers. "The community benefits from longer hours and additional locations than might otherwise be available and the students benefit from hands-on interactions with actual, diverse taxpayer returns."

JoAnn Govea, Senior Tax Consultant with the Internal Revenue Service knows how important the VITA program is. "Many Americans are suffering from job loss and other financial hardship. Because of the assistance and information they receive at VITA Sites, some residents will receive refunds they didn't know they qualified for." Govea continued, "Hopefully, these funds will help offset a tough situation." According to Donna Hurley, Community Services Director for United Way of the Coastal Bend, most program participants plan to do just that, "The VITA effort has such a significant impact on our community. The million plus dollars returned to our residents will, even more than in past years, prove to be of immense help to those who were assisted at the VITA sites. More than 400 clients indicated they would use their return to pay bills, and 133 indicated they would purchase food or clothing. Folks are experiencing hard times and United Way of the Coastal Bend is proud to be part of this effort to help our community."

This is just one more way United Way provides support to our community by focusing on the building blocks to a good life: Education, Income and Health. For more information on how you can join United Way and its partners to build a stronger community, please visit us online at www.uwcb.org or call (361)882-2529.

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