



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 19, 2023

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Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation Announces United Way STARS Program as Recipient of 12th Annual Inspire Giving Grant

-- Funds to support 300 students in underrepresented communities --

SACRAMENTO, CA – The Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation has named [United Way California Capital Region's STARS](#) program as the grant recipient for its 12th Annual Inspire Giving program. The local nonprofit will receive a \$10,000 grant from the Metro Chamber Foundation's Inspire Giving endowment fund, as well as in-kind services to create a four-week intensive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) focused summer school in South Sacramento.

Each year, Inspire Giving provides a \$10,000 grant to help fund a specific project for a local nonprofit. Through the Inspire Giving leadership team, donors, and partners, the grant recipient receives in-kind services, donations, and support for an entire calendar year in order to fulfill its project needs. In 2022, the Sacramento Metro Chamber celebrates 12 years of the Inspire Giving grant. Over the course of the past 12 years, Inspire Giving has supported 12 nonprofits that have collectively received \$120,000 in grants and more than \$1,000,000 in in-kind support and services.

A program of United Way California Capital Region (UWCCR), whose mission is to build stronger, healthier and more compassionate communities, the STARS program pairs volunteers with students in multiple school districts and community sites. STARS helps to serve underrepresented communities that often do not have the same access to education as the greater regional population and partners with TITLE I schools as well as Affordable Housing Communities. Operating from the guiding principles that reading is critical to success and that education is a ladder out of poverty, the program is designed to uplift students who are not reading at grade level. The tutor and student work through literacy curriculum and build vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills through games, books, and lessons.

As voted on by Inspire Giving donors, the 2022 Inspire Giving grant focuses on Education and Educational Attainment along with a demonstrable commitment to address Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging within the organization. This year's Request for Proposals received more than 30 applications.



“The ability to read at or above grade level is a basic building block to achieve educational excellence and we need to do everything possible to boost literary performance, especially in underrepresented communities,” said Kyla Bryant, Executive Director of the Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation. “Early education and equitable access to key resources are fundamental first steps to paving the path for future success and we’re committed to help make it happen.”

With the 2022 Inspire Giving grant, United Way’s STARS program looks forward to improved literacy skills. Utilizing the patented BookNook on-line learning program, STARS staff will collect and analyze data every time students log on, allowing staff to understand in real time their strengths and areas for improvement. UWCCR will also measure both where a student begins relative to grade level and then the progress they are making throughout the year. Student attendance and lesson completion will also be tracked via afterschool program records and the BookNook platform. Through Inspire Giving’s financial and volunteer support, UWCCR’s STARS program will be able to recruit and match more volunteers with students in need at the partner sites and ensure that the volunteers are equipped and prepared with the ability of laptops to support their tutoring efforts on site. Additionally, the support of school supplies, ongoing incentives for reaching milestones, end of year rewards and books for each student, will greatly assist students to reach their goals in the STARS program. Attendance and participation, as well as progress achievements will be able to be rewarded and acknowledged.

“We are honored that the Metro Chamber and Inspire Giving donors have selected our project to help kids reach for the stars through our STEAM-focused summer school program,” said Dr. Dawnté Early, President and CEO, United Way California Capital Region. “As we celebrate 100 years working to end poverty in our region, we are grateful to this community for recognizing the critical role education plays in helping families climb out of poverty. Together we can ensure that all children have access to educational opportunities so they can succeed in school and career.”

During the four-week intensive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) focused summer school in South Sacramento, United Way’s STARS students will have the opportunity to attend daily classes in supplementary STEAM-related topics and participate in experiential enrichment activities. Students will also have an opportunity to visit college campuses and participate in community building activities.

Established in 2009, Inspire Giving is an endowment fund administered by the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. Constructed upon its motto – “Truly, a little is enough, if enough people do it.” – individuals are encouraged to contribute to the fund to collectively give a larger donation than they could give on their own. Donors for each grant year, along with Founding and Legacy members, help select the recipient through a closed voting process. For the 2022 grant, early donors will also help select the priority giving area. Inspire Giving contributions can be [accepted online](#) or by contacting the Metro Chamber Foundation.



For more information about United Way's STARS program, please visit www.yourlocalunitedway.org/our-work/help-kids-succeed/stars. For more information about Inspire Giving, visit MetroChamber.org/Foundation.

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About Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation

The Sacramento Metro Chamber Foundation creates equitable paths to leadership, community development, and employment for people in business. Connected to the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Metro Chamber Foundation facilitates six programs and supports the growth of leaders in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. For more information, please visit www.metrochamber.org/foundation.

About United Way California Capital Region

Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, United Way California Capital Region has been working for a century to fight poverty by creating stronger, healthier, more compassionate communities. The local United Way has found one place in each community to reach the most families in need: School is square one for ending family poverty. United Way uses its Square One approach to end poverty for local families by helping children excel in school, investing in families, and strengthening schools with resources to address increased poverty and deep roots of racial inequality. The local United Way now serves Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties. For more information: www.YourLocalUnitedWay.org.