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COMMUNITY

3 agencies to share \$150,000 from United Way

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Three local agencies will share in \$150,000 from the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County.

The funding was announced Monday and comes on the heels of the successful 2010 United Way Campaign, which raised more than \$13.3 million – the first increase in revenues for the annual fundraiser since 2001.

The Belle Center received \$54,000 to design programming that prepares high school graduates for higher education, trade education or work. The Maryland Street center provides educational, recreational and social services to children and youth up to age 24.

“Our system of service provides what children need to be successful,” said Executive Director Nestor Hernandez. “We are delighted that United Way is joining us by investing in our children.”

The International Institute of Buffalo’s Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Victim Services Program was awarded \$46,000. The program provides immigrant victims of trafficking a partner with appropriate services that take into account the individuals’ cultural and linguistic challenges. The funding came under United Way’s Health and Wellness platform.

“We are deeply grateful to the United Way for recognizing our work as important,” said Eva Hassett, executive director of the International Institute.

Receiving \$50,000 under the Education platform was Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, a nationally recognized youth development program at South Park High School that has improved graduation rates for at-risk youth. The program connects South Park students with a full-time youth advocate, employment training, college preparation support and tutoring services while helping students earn high school diplomas.

“We are well on our way toward helping South Park students stay engaged in school and develop the skills and confidence they need to graduate ready for college and the workplace,” said Executive Director Roderick Green. “And we are incredibly grateful for the financial support from United Way.”

United Way President Michael Weiner noted that the three programs were “highly ranked” in the organization’s most recent application process but did not receive financing simply because funds were not available at the time.

“Today is a proud moment for our organization and should be a very proud moment for each of the 53,000 individuals and 1,200 companies, foundations and other organizations that supported our campaign this year,” he said.

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