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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

United Way Campaign Kicks Off with Spirit of St. Lucie Awards

Fort Pierce, Florida, October 18th, 2011 –United Way of St. Lucie County, with the help of a generous sponsorship from Florida Power & Light, officially kicked off the 49th annual community fund raising campaign with a Community Leaders Breakfast at the PGA Education Center on Friday, Oct. 14th. Amy Brunjes, External Affairs Manager for Florida Power & Light, (FP&L), and Monte Kosoff, Vice-president of Development for United Way of St. Lucie County, (UWSLC), hosted the Spirit of St. Lucie Award presentations for individuals, agencies and businesses that made significant contributions to human service needs in St. Lucie County in the past year.

Employee United Way campaigns continue to bring in 78% of the annual funding for UWSLC. Additionally, grants, neighborhood drives, individual contributions, and fundraisers round out the total. Sharon Kelly-Brown, Sharon J. Kelly Realty, Inc., and Pat Alley, retired bank executive, are serving as Campaign Co-chairs 2011-2012.

“Some employers, including Publix, Florida Power & Light, and UPS serve as pacesetters and have already finished successful campaigns,” said Alley.

“We have tremendous community support, but there are still many employers who do not offer their employees an avenue for community giving. We’re asking everyone to step up efforts to grow the campaign and better help those in need in St. Lucie County,” added Kelly-Brown.

Julie Bland, UWSLC Board Chair, encouraged partnerships. “Full participation from the community is critical for us to advance the common good in the areas of education, income and health in St. Lucie County,” she explained

Bob Brunjes, President and Publisher, Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers and TCPalm.com was the keynote speaker for the event. He pointed out that Scripps reports plenty of good news taking place in our community citing several stories on local philanthropy.

Nine Spirit of St. Lucie Awards were presented to those chosen by a local volunteer committee.

Presentations were made by Julie Bland, UWSLC Board Chair and Area Operations Manager at QVC St. Lucie, Inc., Chris Craft, Chair, St. Lucie County Commissioners, Sydney Liebman, Editor Luminaries, Ken Pruitt, St. Lucie County Property Appraiser, Joe Smith, St. Lucie County Clerk of Circuit Court, Dr. Elish Watlington, Associate Provost for Florida Atlantic University Northern Campus, and Amy Brunjes, Florida Power & Light.

The following were presented awards:

St. Lucie County Health Department received the United Way Community Impact Award.

Diamond Litty, Public Defender and Founder of Life Builders of the Treasure Coast accepted the Community Angel Award.

Port St. Lucie Business Women were presented the Civic Excellence Award.

Treasure Coast Food Bank was given the Agency Excellence award.

QVC St. Lucie, Inc. received the Leadership Award for United Way Employee Campaigns.

Walmart DC #7038 took the Bud & Dot Adams Award for Community Contributions.

St. Lucie County Property Appraiser's Office left with the Paul J. Hiott Award for Community Volunteerism.

Seacoast National Bank was given the Spirit of St. Lucie Award conferred on a company that employs 50 people or less.

Fort Pierce Utilities Authority took the Spirit of St. Lucie Award conferred on a company that employs 51 people or more.

United Way of St. Lucie County is encouraging people in the community to LIVE UNITED by giving to the annual campaign, helping spread the word about programs and services that help people in need, and volunteering their time and talent to a local cause. For more information on the Spirit of St. Lucie Awards or how you can LIVE UNITED and help create a brighter future for those in need in our community, please call 772-464-5300 or visit our website www.unitedwayslc.org.

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