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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VyStar Foundation Awards Grants to 10 Youth Service Nonprofits

Jacksonville, Florida — VyStar Foundation announced today that \$190,000 will be distributed among 10 recipients in its second grant cycle focused on nonprofit organizations that support youth service programs. Specific funding priority was given to programs that create access to nutritious meals and stable housing; build workforce experience skills and education that lead to long-term career pathways; or provide learning environments that encourage creativity and positive development.

“VyStar Foundation is committed to empowering youth, and we are thrilled to be able to support these remarkable organizations that are changing lives within our community,” said Patricia McElroy, President VyStar Foundation. “The recipient organizations were chosen based on their innovative and impactful approaches to engaging youth in creative learning environments.”

The list of grantees and causes:

- **904WARD (Northeast, FL)** – Student Advocacy Training Institute, aimed at providing student advocates with the education and tools to create change towards equity.
- **Goodwill Industries of North Florida (Northeast, FL)** - Workforce Development – employment internship program that will enhance career exploration and workforce development training skills for youth at the Corner at Debs Store.
- **Hubbard House, Inc. (Northeast, FL)** - Children's Services Program, focused on providing developmental, academic and therapeutic needs for victims of domestic violence.
- **Jacksonville Arts & Music School Inc. (Northeast, FL)** - JAMS General Programming Support and Youth Leadership Cultivation program fosters innovative leadership using creativity to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Rescue Outreach Mission of Central Florida, Inc. (South Central, FL)** - Youth Shelter and Support Program will provide housing to youth experiencing homelessness.
- **IMPOWER, Inc. (South Central, FL)** - The Village Transitional Housing Program creates access to stable housing through transitional housing for vulnerable, disadvantaged youth exiting foster care.
- **Loop It Up Savannah Inc. (Southeast, GA)** - The Mindfulness Zone uses mindfulness techniques, yoga, age-appropriate literature, and expressive arts to help youth navigate emotionally challenging circumstances both in school and beyond.
- **Generation W Inc. (Northeast/South Central, FL)** - Multiply the WOW is a girl-focused leadership, education, and mentorship program designed to uplift and elevate girls with the power of the Positive and the Possible.
- **ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST INCORPORATED (North Central, FL)** - From the Classroom to the Creek: The Creekside Environmental Ed for Kids Program engages students from Title I schools in Alachua and Putnam counties in experiential outdoor learning.
- **I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, Inc. (Northeast, FL)** – In-Sight College Readiness Program works with teens residing at the shelter by creating individualized college and career plans to set every student up for long-term success.



"We look forward to seeing the positive impact these organizations will bring to our communities and the bright future they will help create for our next generation, McElroy said."

VyStar Foundation supports nonprofit organizations in Georgia, North and Central Florida. Since its inception, the foundation has had a total impact of nearly \$1 million in 2023. Grants totaling \$387,282 were given to 20 local organizations addressing the critical needs of youth, military members, veterans, and their families in addition to a \$570,000 building donation to Three Grains of Rice Missions. The non-profit provides resources for housing, food, clothing, medical care and educational programming to individuals and families struggling with food and housing instability along with local and international disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Grants through VyStar Foundation are available to 501(c)(3) organizations whose purpose and mission align with the Foundation's strategic giving pillars:

- **Military:** Ensuring military members, veterans and their families receive the social services they need and the recognition they deserve
- **Youth:** Empowering youth by providing equitable access to creative learning environments
- **Community Building:** Cultivating financially strong, culturally vibrant, and interconnected communities

VyStar Foundation will launch its next grant cycle this March giving funding priority to nonprofit organizations that support military members, veterans and their families. The military application opens on Mar. 11, 2024, and closes on Apr. 14, 2024. To learn more about VyStar Foundation and upcoming information sessions, visit vystarfoundation.org.

About VyStar Foundation

As VyStar Credit Union's philanthropic arm, VyStar Foundation was established in 2021 to strengthen the credit union's ability to do good. Operating as a 501(c)(3) charity, the Foundation is dedicated to doing good and leading by example through collaborative partnerships that support youth, military members and veterans and overall community vitality in the areas served by VyStar Credit Union. For more information, visit vystarfoundation.org.
