In September, our United Way’s board of directors approved a new partnership with the Rapides Parish School System to start a pilot after-school program at Huddle Elementary.

This is not just any after-school program. It’s based on a set of quality standards for after-school education that have been shown to keep kids in school and help them succeed academically. Our ultimate goal is to improve the rate of high-school graduations in Rapides Parish, but that challenge is won or lost long before a student enters high school.

Building on the example of the excellent program at the Pineville Youth Center, the Huddle Elementary program will track the attendance and grades of forty students. Our United Way is funding transportation home after the program for those students who need it; without this, a number of students would be unable to participate.

Your contributions to United Way are the reason we are able to continue to form this and other partnerships and move the needle on issues in our community to create lasting change in central Louisiana. When you donate to our local United Way, you are making a difference where we live, and we appreciate it!
SEASON’S READINGS

On Saturday, November 12, 2016, United Way, along with the City of Alexandria and Rapides Early Childhood Network (RECN), will be hosting the 3rd Annual Season’s Readings event.

Please join us in the Downtown Alexandria Mini Park from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm for fun activities, face painting, balloon animals, storytelling, train rides and books to take home all for free thanks to our sponsor, Luneau & Beck, LLC.

Early childhood education is an important focus area for United Way, and by hosting this event, we are not only putting books into the hands of children, we are spreading awareness of the importance of literacy and reading to children.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As we begin to wrap up 2016, please don’t forget to wrap up your workplace campaign and submit the results to United Way. We rely on you to make our very important funding decisions each December!

We have so many exciting things happening at United Way, and your support is what is making it happen. By donating to United Way, you are making a huge impact in Cenla. If you haven’t sent in your gift yet, it’s not too late. Go to uwcl.org and click GIVE to make your contribution for the 2016 campaign!

HOLIDAY WISH LIST

For the last few years, United Way has put together a list of Holiday volunteer and donation opportunities for many non-profit agencies in our area. If you are looking for a way to give back this holiday season, check out our guide at uwcl.org/holiday-wish-list.

HOLIDAY BOOK EVENTS

SEASON’S READINGS
November 12 from 11:00-1:00 PM
Downtown Alexandria Mini Park

HOLIDAY READING WITH SANTA
December 9 and December 15 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM
Alexandria Mall

HOLIDAY LIGHT SAFARI
December 16 from 5:00 - 8:00 PM
Alexandria Zoo

STAY CONNECTED WITH US
On October 20, 2016, United Way hosted our 16th Annual Wild Cook-Off! We had 14 cooking teams competing with over 35 dishes prepared in our four categories of Wild Game, Cajun, Ribs and BBQ. Thanks to P&G for sponsoring this event and for all of our teams and volunteers who helped make this our most successful cook-off to date!

### 2016 WINNERS

#### WILD GAME
1st Place: RoyOMartin
2nd Place: Southwest Beverage and LSUA (tie)
3rd Place: Jim Villard

#### CAJUN
1st Place: LSUA
2nd Place: Cleco and P&G (tie)
3rd Place: The GEO Group

#### RIBS
1st Place: Rapides Tax Assessor’s Office
2nd Place: YPG/Red River Bank
3rd Place: Venture Marketing

#### BBQ
1st Place: Southern Heritage Bank
2nd Place: RoyOMartin
3rd Place: YPG/Red River Bank and Southwest Beverage (tie)

Best Presentation: RoyOMartin
People's Choice Award: Southwest Beverage