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**For Immediate Release**

**United Way Grants \$450,000 to Jewish Family Service of San Diego to Coordinate Kindergarten Readiness Network**

*Award is Part of Nearly \$2 Million Grant to Four Community Partnerships for Children and Families in Santee, Linda Vista, and Tierrasanta*

**Contact:** Ivana Hawley: [ivana@behmedia.com](mailto:ivana@behmedia.com) or 858-453-9600

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**SAN DIEGO** – United Way of San Diego County has awarded Jewish Family Service (JFS) of San Diego a \$450,000 grant to support the launch and implementation of the Linda Vista Kindergarten Readiness Network, beginning in July 2015. The grant is part of a nearly \$2 million funding package that United Way has awarded to four community partnerships working to help the youngest San Diegans and their families succeed. In addition to Jewish Family Service, awardees include the Military Family & School Success Impact Network, led by SAY San Diego; the Tiered Quality and Rating Improvement System Network, led by the San Diego County Office of Education; and the Santee Primary Success Impact Network, led by the Santee School District.

These networks were funded based on their commitment to using a “collective impact” framework – a proven, collaborative method of tackling complex social issues. Each partnership brings together approximately 20 nonprofits, health providers, schools, government agencies, businesses, and other community-based organizations to take action on key issues, including getting children ready for kindergarten and reading at grade-level, as well as supporting family stability and health. Numerous research studies show that these outcomes are linked to improved high school graduation rates and students’ continued success.

Jewish Family Service's Linda Vista Kindergarten Readiness Network -- in collaboration with more than 20 community partner organizations, including Educational Enrichment Services, Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego Unified School District, SAY San Diego, American Academy of Pediatrics, Councilmember Scott Sherman, UCSD School of Medicine, and USD Department of Learning and Teaching – will come together to address the array of educational, emotional, economic, and health-related needs of Linda Vista children and families to ensure increased rates of kindergarten readiness.

“We believe multiple organizations effectively working together can always do better than one,” said United Way President and CEO Kevin Crawford. “United Way’s role will be to fund these community partnerships, while also providing our expertise in convening large groups around common goals, taking a hard look at data, and building the infrastructure to make it all work. We want to support children outside the classroom, so that they are best prepared to learn inside the classroom.”

Shana Hazan, Director of Institutional Giving, Public Policy, and Government Relations at Jewish Family Service of San Diego, noted, “This project will be informed by research, driven by data, and confirmed by community voice. This will help assure that we are meeting the most urgent needs of Linda Vista’s children and families.”

The project will incorporate a two-pronged approach. First, the pilot project will provide a hub for family support to increase the utilization of support services required to improve rates of kindergarten readiness in Linda Vista. A Community and Family Liaison will work with families and community partners full-time, five days a week, at each of the two EES full-day early learning centers, which serve low-income working families. Second, the Kindergarten Readiness Network will bring together a cross-section of stakeholders to identify and leverage existing resources and services in Linda Vista, identify and address gaps in services via a baseline report and pilot project, and identify and take action around systemic issues that reduce kindergarten readiness and/or can be remedied through policy change.

Funding for the grants was made possible through the support of companies across San Diego County, including AT&T, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, GEICO, NASSCO, Solar Turbines, UPS, and many others.

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### **ABOUT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE**

Since 1918, Jewish Family Service of San Diego has been a trusted community resource for individuals and families in times of need. Our wide range of integrated services *Empower Individuals & Families to Move Toward Self-Sufficiency*, *Support Aging With Dignity*, and *Foster Community Connection & Engagement* throughout San Diego County and the Coachella Valley. Many people turn to Jewish Family Service

with a specific need, such as hunger. And that first contact often leads to a wide range of services, including counseling, education, job coaching, transportation, and more. Our message to every person who turns to Jewish Family Service in search of a better life is, WE'RE WITH YOU. To learn how JFS transforms lives in our community, visit [www.jfssd.org](http://www.jfssd.org).

### **ABOUT UNITED WAY OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

By working with nonprofits, schools, businesses and community leaders, United Way of San Diego County tackles the issues that impact children and families in San Diego. The nonprofit plays a unique role, bringing the right people and resources together to spark breakthrough community action that elevates every child and family toward a brighter future. Through a Collective Impact model, United Way solves complex problems by maximizing existing community partners/resources and establishing common goals to create permanent change in the community. United Way's efforts include anchoring the City Heights Partnership for Children and being a key partner in the upcoming Vista Partnership for Children. LIVE UNITED is a call to action for everyone to get involved by donating and volunteering. Learn more at [www.uwsd.org](http://www.uwsd.org), the [blog](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).