

For Immediate Release

POVERTY SIMULATION GIVES SMYRNA EDUCATORS A TASTE OF WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING POOR IN DELAWARE

Smyrna, DE (December 16, 2019) --- Poverty is no game. But in a training series organized by United Way of Delaware, in partnership with First State Community Action Agency, Inc. and M&T Bank, Smyrna School District teachers, administrators and other professionals are participating in a series of immersive poverty simulations that offer a glimpse of what it's like to be poor in Delaware. Early participant reaction suggests that the experience is an eye opener.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more people in Delaware are living in poverty today than was the case after the Great Recession. And Delaware is one of only two states in the country where the rate of poverty went up in 2018, increasing nearly two points to 13.6 percent, the highest it's been in more than a decade. But statistics tell only half the story. To gain more insight into the daily challenges of living in poverty, Smyrna educators are trying to survive a "month" of poverty by way of an hour-long interactive experience that mimics the obstacles and hardships that come with being poor. During the simulation, teachers, administrators and volunteers adopt various roles and encounter a wide range of difficulties that people living in poverty must overcome every day.

The goals of the simulation are to promote greater awareness of the effects of poverty; shift attitudes from viewing poverty as a personal failure toward an understanding of the structural underpinnings of poverty; encourage empathy for those living in poverty and inspire local solutions to the problem.

After completing the simulation, one teacher said, "I gained more empathy going through the poverty simulation. At the same time, I am appreciative for my current situation." An administrator added, "I want all of our future students and teaching staff to get a first-hand feel of the barriers and challenges that students and families living in high-need communities face on a daily basis."

In addition to those in Smyrna, the poverty simulations have been taking place in other Delaware communities and more are planned for the future. For more information or to organize a poverty simulation in your community or organization, contact Jamee Boone at jboone@uwde.org.

About United Way of Delaware

Founded in 1946, United Way of Delaware (UWDE) works to advance the common good by focusing on three key areas: Early Education, College and Career Readiness and Financial Stability. UWDE is engaged in a long-term strategy to eliminate the root causes of Delaware's most pressing social problems in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties. UWDE is also responsible for the United Way brand in Salem County, New Jersey. UWDE works collectively with businesses, government, social service agencies, academic groups, community organizations and concerned individuals to establish

positive, long-lasting solutions for today and into the future. For more information or to support UWDE, visit www.uwde.org, follow us on Twitter @UnitedWayDE, or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayofDelaware>, or call (302) 573-3717.

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Media Advisory: Poverty simulations are scheduled in Smyrna on 02/21/20, 03/27/20, and 04/28/20 and will take place in other locations across the state on other dates. Media are encouraged to attend and observe. To do so, or for more information, contact Brent Porter at bporter@uwde.org.

For more information, contact:

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