



THE WEST FLORIDA WAY: 2026 KICKOFF

January, 2026

Free Tax Prep: VITA Kickoff

Keep your hard-earned money! Our **VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)** program provides free, IRS-certified tax preparation for households in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties earning **\$67,000 or less**.

[More Info](#)



A Message from Our CEO

As we move through the start of 2026, our mission remains clear: building a stronger, more equitable West Florida for everyone. Your generosity continues to fuel the programs that serve as a safety net for neighbors in crisis and a springboard for those working toward a better future. Thank you for being an essential part of this work. Together, we are showing our community that United is the Way.

Laura Gilliam

Be Someone's 15 minutes

We are thrilled to share that our **QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)** training was recently featured on **WEAR ABC 3 News!**



The segment highlights how our very own **DJ KInt, FVSL Care Coordinator**, is leading the charge to empower local "gatekeepers" with these lifesaving skills.

Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response that anyone can learn in under an hour. Under DJ's expert guidance, you'll learn how to recognize warning signs, offer hope, and refer neighbors in crisis to the right resources.

[Watch the Story](#)

Upcoming Events



VITA Kickoff Event

Maximize your refund at our **VITA Kickoff Event!** Join us for free, IRS-certified tax prep for households earning **\$69,000 or less.**

- **When:** Saturday, Jan. 31 | 9 AM – 3 PM
- **Where:** PSC Main Campus

Open to walk-ins!

[Learn More](#)



Women United: Cake Decorating

Get ready to get creative! Join **Women United** for a fun, hands-on cake decorating event. Whether you're a master of frosting or a total beginner, come enjoy a sweet night of networking and community impact.

Space is limited, so grab your apron and secure your spot today!

[Learn More](#)



Save the Date: Glitz and Gallop Gala

Dust off your biggest hats and sharpest bow ties! Our annual **Glitz & Gallop Gala** returns on **May 2, 2026**, from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM at the **Sanders Beach-Corinne Jones Resource Center.**

Early interest is already high, so mark your calendars and **get your tickets now**, you won't want to miss the event of the season!

[Learn More](#)

Make Your Impact



Volunteer



Give a Hand, Donate Today!

Ready to give back? Whether you want to mentor a student, help at a food pantry, or assist with our VITA tax sites, **Get Connected** is your one-stop shop for volunteering.

Explore hundreds of local opportunities in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and find the perfect match for your schedule and skills. Join thousands of neighbors who prove that **United is the Way**.

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

Your generosity fuels every program mentioned in this newsletter. From providing free tax prep to lifesaving mental health training, your gift stays local and creates lasting change for families in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

Whether it's a one-time gift or a monthly contribution, every dollar helps us build a stronger, more resilient West Florida.

[Donate Now](#)

Check Out Our Latest Blogs



What Will You Do With Your Refund?

For individuals and families across our community, a tax refund isn't just extra cash. It's a chance to get ahead, catch up, or simply breathe a little easier. Filing early puts you in control of that opportunity. Read more [here](#).



Building Wellness With Healthy Schools Escambia

During the 2024–2025 school year, Healthy Schools Escambia continued advancing whole-child wellness by building strong partnerships, expanding access to essential services, and laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term impact. With support from the Escambia Children's Trust, this

work reflects a shared commitment to equity, prevention, and meeting children and families where they are. Read more [here](#).



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