

# PHOTO RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## United Way Awards Grant to Ascension Parish Head Start Program for Sensational Learning in Donaldsonville

**Baton Rouge, La. (January 29, 2020)** – Capital Area United Way awarded the Ascension Parish School Board with a \$10,072.45 grant to assist with Sensational Learning at the Ascension Parish Head Start program. This funding is part of the Ascension Parish Grant Funding Opportunity that awarded \$100,188 dollars to ten nonprofits for impact work in Ascension Parish.

"Children begin developing skills at a young age," said Edy Addison, Director of Community Impact and Initiatives at United Way. "The Ascension Parish School Board identified a need for sensational learning in the Donaldsonville area through the Head Start program, and we know it will be a great success in building social and emotional functioning in children."

The grant will be used in the Donaldsonville area to increase social, emotional and executive functioning amongst three-year-olds through assessment, technology and sensory gym along with parental support. Projected outcomes include an increased percentage in those students who can self-regulate and manage emotions from 62 percent to 100 percent. The program will also increase social emotional development domains through teacher interaction, with the goal to increase scores from 5.71 to 6 or higher in measurement.

"We are appreciative of the opportunity and know that it will greatly benefit our students and staff at Ascension Head Start! The CAUW grant funding for 'Sensational Learning,' will help us ensure we are developing our students' executive function. Executive function is a greater predictor of academic and life success than IQ. These are the brain-based skills that we use to control thoughts, actions and feelings, achieve goals, solve problems, and more," said former Head Start Principal Martha Babin. "The purpose of this project is to objectively measure executive function in children and its development over time. The CAUW grant will fund the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (the MEFS App): Reflection Science Executive Function Assessment and strengthen an existing sensory gym. With this grant, we will improve the social emotional / executive function and physical development of our students by providing specific interventions and strategies for the identified behaviors."

This grant complements the existing work of United Way in the areas of Health, Education, Income Stability and Basic Needs of Ascension Parish residents. In addition to these dollars, United Way is investing 3 million in more than 37 programs and organizations that are providing services in our 10-parish area. All of these organizations are addressing ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), of which 45 percent of the Capital Area residents are considered employed but still struggle every month to afford necessary expenses like transportation, food, childcare and healthcare. These programs along with all of United Way's current investments can be found on their website: [www.cauw.org/partners](http://www.cauw.org/partners).

***\*Photos Attached***

**Caption: Ascension Parish Head Start Photo 1:** (L-R) Edy Addison, Director of Community Impact and Initiatives at Capital Area United Way; and former Ascension Head Start Principal and grant author Martha Babin (holding the check on right) are surrounded by Head Start teachers and staff.



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**Capital Area United Way**

For more than 95 years, Capital Area United Way has touched thousands of lives in our 10-parish area. We envision a community where everyone is empowered to reach their full potential. Our mission is to solve our community's toughest challenges by leveraging partnerships to advance the common good in education, income stability, and healthy living. To learn more visit [www.cauw.org](http://www.cauw.org).