



**RealSense**  
Real Dollars For Real People.  
WWW.REALSENSEJAX.ORG ■ 904-632-0600



United Way  
of Northeast Florida

**ATTN: News Director/Assignment Editor**  
**\*\*\*\* Media Release\*\*\*\***

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**Jessie Ball duPont Fund Invests in RealSense Campaign**  
*Community partners help families become financially independent*

JACKSONVILLE, FL – The RealSense Prosperity Campaign, an initiative of United Way of Northeast Florida, was awarded a grant of \$665,000 by the Trustees of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. The grant, the largest ever received by RealSense, will be used to hire temporary tax site personnel and to strengthen the RealSense infrastructure.

The RealSense Campaign works to increase family financial stability in three ways: increasing income, increasing education and increasing assets. Launched in 2003 through a partnership of community and nonprofit organizations, business leaders, government, and other key stakeholders, the initiative is comprised of more than 50 organizations from all sectors of the community. *(See attachment for a complete listing of RealSense partners.)*

RealSense provides information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), free income tax preparation for those who qualify, money management and credit restoration education, and information about matched savings accounts (Individual Development Accounts or IDAs) that encourage setting and attaining long-term goals and financial stability. The EITC allows qualifying low-income filers to claim a tax credit on their federal income tax, generally resulting in a refund.

RealSense clients have an average annual income of \$23,953, compared with a \$36,616 per capita personal income (2006) and \$41,736 median household income (2004) for Duval County. Too frequently, these individuals are unaware of tax credits available to them. For example, a typical 2007 EITC refund for a head of household with two children earning \$23,953 was more than \$4,000.

In addition, many low-income tax filers have no checking or savings account and depend on payday loans, title loan companies and pawn shops to handle their money. By offering free tax preparation, RealSense helps taxpayers claim valuable tax credits, avoid the cost of tax preparation, and learn the basic lessons of prudent money management to help them chart a better course for themselves and their families.

In the five years RealSense has existed, more than \$14 million in Earned Income Tax Credits have flowed back to Northeast Florida working families. In addition, RealSense clients have claimed approximately \$8 million in Child Tax Credits and have saved an estimated \$5 million in tax preparation and refund anticipation loan fees.

The tax site client base has increased by 783 percent, from a baseline of 1,563 people served in 2002 to 13,807 people served in 2008. More than 300 volunteers—from Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, AARP Tax-Aide sites, and The Benefit Bank sites—prepare taxes each year.

RealSense financial education partners, including Family Foundations, Duval County Extension Service, Northeast Florida Community Action Agency (NFCAA), Jacksonville Urban League, and Florida Department of Financial Services, have taught classes resulting in more than 40,000 student hours. The RealSense partners who manage matched savings accounts, Family Foundations and NFCAA, announced 45 IDA graduates, resulting in 35 becoming new home owners.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund makes grants to more than 330 eligible organizations identified by Mrs. duPont in her will. The Fund has assets of more than \$315 million and has awarded \$265 million in grants since 1977.

United Way of Northeast Florida works to create real, long-lasting change in Northeast Florida by focusing on the building blocks for a good life. In partnership with volunteers, community organizations, and leaders, United Way is creating opportunities to improve life for people in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and northern St. Johns counties. In addition, United Way leads United Way 2-1-1, a 24/7 information referral hotline; Life: Act 2, a pro-active response to an exploding senior population; and Full Service Schools, a community approach to removing barriers to academic success. For more information, call 904-390-3200 or visit [www.aboutunitedway.org](http://www.aboutunitedway.org) or [www.realsensejax.org](http://www.realsensejax.org).

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