

Media Contact:

Leah Stockton, Keys Area President

lstockton@keysunitedway.org

305-735-1929



For Immediate Release: April 3, 2023

Scholarship Opens for Marine Science Educational Advancement

United Way of Collier and the Keys to award scholarships for marine science students

Florida Keys — United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) continues to blaze the trail that supports the Florida Keys community and its investment in the marine environment. Now in its second year, UWCK has opened its 2023 Marine Science Educational Advancement Scholarship for Monroe County residents pursuing marine science related studies.

Last year UWCK awarded 6 scholarships to students throughout the Florida Keys. With these scholarships the recipients have been afforded opportunities for success, including Key West residents Gracia Rojas and Cricket Desmarais. Gracia completed an EPP/MSI funded research study titled “*Effects of direct removal on the population dynamics of corallivorous snails*” and was on the College of the Florida Keys President’s List in the fall of 2022. Using her marine science education and experience in Creative Writing, Cricket has recently taken a position as NOAA’s Communications Coordinator for *Mission: Iconic Reefs*.

A Scholarship Committee will review the applicants, taking into consideration educational achievement, career objectives, school activities, references, and financial status. Priority will be given to students already participating in this work and demonstrating financial need. The application period is now open and has been extended to close on April 17, 2023. Eligibility requirements and more information about the scholarship, as well as a link to the application, can be found at <https://www.keysunitedway.org/marine-science-educational-advancement-scholarship>.

As part of UWCK’s *Revitalizing the Florida Keys Through Reef Restoration and Beyond* efforts, the scholarship initiative will increase marine science related employment opportunities for local students. It will also help provide financial stability for the community by supplying the workforce needed to sustain and further ongoing reef restoration efforts, including NOAA’s *Mission: Iconic Reefs*.



Coral Shores High School students participate in a marine science research project. Brooke El-Koury (left) and Christina Agostini (right) prepare seedling trays to be used in their STEM fair project that will examine the effects of ocean acidification on red mangroves.

###

About United Way of Collier and the Keys

The United Way of Collier and the Keys (“UWCK”) is committed to investing in and working to create a community where all individuals and families in Collier and Monroe Counties have an opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential. We will accomplish this through improving education, economic stability and health, as well as providing access to food and safety net services. United Way plays a unique role in convening businesses, nonprofits and government to work together to address community needs. Give. Advocate. Volunteer. LIVE UNITED. For more information, call the Key West office at (305) 735-1929. **Give. Advocate. Volunteer. LIVE UNITED.**

A high resolution copy of the included image can be found here:

https://uwcollier.sharepoint.com/:i:/g/EWJkFSArHbdNlknIBNeDOEBG_64x2GC1ub7TOxvuHALow?e=IBqEjB