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Teacher cited for giving beyond the classroom door

By Jason Boulay

Many people point to teachers as having influenced them; some even credit them for having a hand in their success. As for the educators who make up the Providence Teachers Union, giving back does not end at the classroom door; their continued support for United Way of Rhode Island's mission makes a difference in the lives of people across the state.

Every year, Rhode Island labor unions choose the recipient of the United Way's Dante F. Mollo Labor Award, and the 2019 recipient is Providence Teachers Union President Maribeth Calabro, who was honored at the United Way's recent annual celebration.

Looking back to the beginning of the union's work with United Way, Maribeth says, "When we first started hosting a workplace campaign, some teachers would give and some wouldn't. It continued like that for a while, until they saw the impact their donations were having; that's when things changed.

"Our teachers give generously to causes close to their heart," says Maribeth. "At the same time, it's important to know where their donations are being used. With United Way of Rhode Island, you always know where 100 percent of your money goes."

The inclination of the teachers to give back is visible in all aspects of their work; a trait they hope to instill in their students. Amazed by the generosity of the teachers, Maribeth says, "They do so much for others,

including raising \$5,000 for Puerto Rico after the hurricane, giving money to a local family following a tragedy and supporting families every prom season through our Providence Princess Initiative.”

Maribeth said she was honored to receive the award on behalf of men and women she admires. “I’m proud of my teachers; they come to school every day focused on teaching their students, who are Rhode Island’s future,” she says. “What could be more important than that?”

United Way of Rhode Island established the Dante F. Mollo Labor Award in recognition of the solid working relationship it has with unions.

Jason Boulay is project manager, digital media marketing, for United Way of Rhode Island.