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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Westonwood Ranch Awarded Community Impact Grant Through United Way Emerald Coast and CHELCO Partnership

Freeport, FL (June 14, 2025) — Westonwood Ranch has been awarded a \$25,000 Community Investment Grant as part of the 2025–2026 United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) Community Grant Cycle, made possible through a partnership with United Way Emerald Coast and CHELCO.

UWEC's highly competitive Community Grant process supports programs that demonstrate clear community need, program effectiveness, measurable outcomes, and the delivery of impactful services. Grant funding is specifically directed toward organizations serving vulnerable populations identified under the ALICE framework — *Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed*. ALICE households earn above the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic necessities such as housing, childcare, food, healthcare, and reliable transportation.

Funds awarded through this grant will help Westonwood Ranch reduce financial and transportation barriers for individuals with disabilities. Financial hardship affects all aspects of life, from housing stability and food security to access to education and technology. When combined with disability, systemic barriers and discrimination further limit access to opportunity and long-term independence.

"This is the disparity Westonwood Ranch exists to address," said Lindy Wood, Founder of Westonwood Ranch. "Through our scholarship program made possible by grant partnerships, we remove financial barriers that prevent individuals from accessing our programs consistently so we can continue to create meaningful pathways to independence and employment for the individuals we serve."

Westonwood Ranch is grateful for the opportunity to partner with United Way Emerald Coast and CHELCO in building pathways to opportunity and strengthening the community for individuals with disabilities and ALICE households across the region.

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Westonwood Ranch is a 501c3 non profit organization located in Freeport, FL that takes a



visionary approach in providing life skills and job skills training to teens and young adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. Programs at Westonwood Ranch provide hands- on learning opportunities that increase independence, improve self confidence, and increase job related skills. Westonwood Ranch is a place that provides every individual opportunities to grow, despite their disability.

United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) is a local volunteer-based organization that brings individuals and groups together in a community wide effort to help people. United, they fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in Okaloosa and Walton counties. To drive positive change, UWEC evaluates our community's diverse needs, mobilizes the caring power of the community, and directs resources to the areas that will have the most positive impact.

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