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# NEWS RELEASE

## United Way Fox Cities

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### United Way announces Community Investment Grants at Report to the Community

**Appleton, Wis.** – United Way Fox Cities has awarded Community Investment Grants for programs that will support a wide diversity of community issues including early childhood education and school readiness. Diana Buechel, Board Chair made the announcement at the United Way Fox Cities Report to the Community:

- \$150,000 to support the first four years of programming costs for a new **Boys & Girls Club** in Menasha. The Club facility will help a growing number of low-income children and youth thrive and succeed.
- \$150,000 for the creation of the **Community Early Learning Center** located at Catholic Central Elementary School at St. Mary's Parish in Appleton. The renovated facility is designed to support the formation of a multi-agency center focusing on serving families of young children to ensure that the children are ready for kindergarten by age five.
- \$50,000 for **Reach Out and Read**, a program piloted by St. Elizabeth Hospital. Through the program, school readiness is encouraged by giving new books to children and guidance to parents in the exam rooms of pediatricians and family practitioners. The goal is to implement the program regionally, reaching an estimated 15,000 children
- \$90,000 to the **Fox Valley Memory Project**. The Project was launched in 2012 to reduce isolation and make the quality of life measurably better for those with dementia. To accomplish this, the Project is serving both persons with dementia and their caregivers, and providing education on creating a dementia-friendly community.

- \$100,000 to assist disabled and other disadvantaged workers in obtaining employment through **Thrive Academy** at Valley Packaging, Inc. The goal of the project is to help people achieve self-sufficiency through soft skills and job training.

United Way initiatives continued to make a measureable difference in addressing community needs in 2014.

- **United Way's PATH for Students**, an initiative that provides mental health therapy in 10 school districts in the Fox Cities continues to garner attention from communities across the country as far away as Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Based on two cost benefit analyses conducted by the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the benefits to the students, schools and community from PATH total over \$9 million over the lifetime of the students. PATH has touched the lives of nearly 1000 students, who were unable to obtain mental health services elsewhere in the community.
- **The Connector**, an initiative in partnership with Valley Transit continues to provide access to transportation to second and third shift workers, expanding opportunities for employment, and promoting self-sufficiency. 91% of the rides are employment related. The Connector has provided over 105,000 rides since its inception in 2007.
- **The Fox Cities Diaper Bank**, now in its fourth year of operation has provided nearly 1.3 million diapers, with 500,000 distributed in 2014. The diaper bank receives strong community support and benefit from collaborative efforts. The Appleton Post-Crescent's Dollars for Diapers Do It campaign, has provided funding that enables a well-stocked bank of diapers for families in need.
- **The Weight of the Fox Valley** was launched in 2014. This three-county initiative has a vision of working together to achieve and maintain a healthy weight at every age. Weight of the Fox Valley is championed by a Leadership team of 30+ community leaders from throughout the three counties. United Way Fox Cities and the Oshkosh United Way function as the backbone for Weight of the Fox Valley, serving as the convener, and manager.

## **Wes Urch Volunteer Service Award Recipients**

United Way Fox Cities' most prestigious award is given annually to volunteers who have demonstrated dedication and commitment to building a better community through his/her work with United Way Fox Cities. The award is named in honor of Wes Urch, the first executive director of United Way of Neenah/Menasha. Wes was the face of United Way for over twenty years, leading the organization through tremendous growth and change. The 2014 Wes Urch recipients are:

**Mary Jo Buchberger**, Retired – Integrity Mutual Insurance Company. Buchberger has been a United Way volunteer since 2004 leading the Strengthening Families Impact Area. She currently guides the Community Development efforts of the organization, successfully leading the past three investment processes.

**Liesl Britzke**, Bergstrom Automotive. Britzke has been an integral member of the Emerging Leaders taking the lead as organizer for the annual Valentine Festival. She is the Employee Campaign Manager, overseeing the workplace campaign for United Way at Bergstrom Automotive.

This has been an extraordinary year, president and CEO Peter Kelly said. “The willingness of so many community partners to collaborate for the greater good and the passion to improve lives is what makes the Fox Cities a special place. I am so grateful for the support of our work and of this wonderful community we all call home.”

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### **New Board Members:**

- Mike Carini, USW Local 2-482, Kimberly-Clark
- Pam Henson, The Post Crescent
- Dave Morton, Morton Long Term Care
- Tom Riordan, Neenah Enterprises

### **Nominated for a one year, Special Appointment:**

- Tim Bergstrom, Bergstrom Automotive
- Mark Westphal, Fox Valley Area Labor Council

**Second three year term:**

- Shannon Full, Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Jim Kotek, Menasha Corp.
- Melanie Miller, Bemis Company

**Officers and Committee Chairs**

- Chair – Tim Bergstrom, Bergstrom Automotive
- Vice Chair – Jim Kotek, Menasha Corporation
- Treasurer – Melanie Miller, Bemis Company
- Community Impact – Mike Hochholzer, Associated Bank & Dave Morton, Morton Long  
Term Care
- Campaign – Tom Riordan, Neenah Enterprises
- Marketing & Communications, Bob Thibault, Retired, Kimberly-Clark
- Personnel – Peggy Ament, Kimberly- Clark
- Audit – Tom Palmer, GLK Foods

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