

# NEWS RELEASE

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## United Way Fox Cities

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### **United Way to kickoff annual fundraising campaign**

(Appleton) United Way Fox Cities' supporters gathered on the grounds of SECURA Insurance Companies on Tuesday, August 30 to officially mark the beginning of the 2016 United Way community campaign. A goal of \$8.45 million dollars has been established for the campaign. Campaign Co-Chairs, Mike Weller, of Mike Weller and Associates, and David G. Voss Jr. of Miron Construction will lead the campaign.

Keynote speaker for the event, Tony Gonzalez, vice president of community development for United Way Fox Cities provided information on the recently released 2016 LIFE (Leading Indicators for Excellence) Study related to poverty and basic needs in the Fox Cities. Key data includes:

- Our community has seen a steady increase in Wisconsin Works (W-2) program participants, alongside an increase in the percentage of the population receiving food stamps.
- A slow growth in household income along with an increase in rent suggests an increase in working poor, who may be marginally above the poverty threshold, but are susceptible to food insecurity.
- The poverty rate for single women raising children is eight times higher than the rate for married couples with children across the Fox Cities counties from 2010 to 2014.

The LIFE Study provides research that United Way Fox Cities uses to make informed investment decisions and to keep a pulse on community needs. Another barometer of community issues is the United Way 2-1-1 program. 2-1-1 is a free and confidential call center that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call specialists have access to thousands of resources, and have the training to connect the caller to the help they need. The call center is on track to exceed over 12,000 calls this

year. Many of the calls are from people living in poverty, or families that are one emergency from financial disaster.

Mike Weller, is leading the campaign for the third time. Weller said, "We are very fortunate to live in such a caring community, where we can work to provide help to those who need it, made possible because of the generosity of the people who live here. I have seen the impact that United Way has, and we will continue to make a difference by helping one person at a time through the work of the United Way organization."

David G. Voss, Jr, added, "United Way does an incredible job of putting a face to the problems our communities are facing, researching how to solve them, and creating and implementing a plan for true change. They are great at assessing the needs of our community and allocating dollars and resources where they are not only most needed, but where they can make the biggest impact. Instead of just talking about the issues, they take action and work to solve them."

End

*United Way fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community.*