

News Release

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United Way Fox Cities

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United Way to kick off annual fundraising campaign

(Appleton) United Way Fox Cities' supporters gathered on the grounds of SECURA Insurance Companies on Wednesday, August 29 to officially mark the beginning of the 2018 United Way community campaign. A goal of \$8.75 million dollars has been established for the campaign. Campaign Co-Chairs, Dustin McClone, McClone and Jim Kotek, Menasha Corporation will lead the campaign.

United Way Fox Cities has established four goals with targets to be met by the year 2021.

- Build financially stable individuals and families

2021 target: Stabilize more working families by reducing the number of renters experiencing housing cost-burden from 39% to 36%, which will impact 960 households.

- Make sure all children are on track to reach their full potential

2021 target: Secure a brighter future for more of our children by making sure 60% of third grade students read at or above a proficient level.

- Foster a community of mentally healthy children, youth, and adults

2021 target: Foster a healthier community by decreasing by 20% each, the youth and adults struggling with three or more poor mental health days per month.

- Ensure children are free of abuse and neglect

2021 target: Keep our children safe by reducing the number of screened-in cases of child abuse and neglect by 23%.

The kickoff program focused on two of the four goals - building financially stable individuals and families, and helping children reach their full potential. Joe Mauthe, Executive Director of the Housing Partnership addressed the issue of being "cost burdened" when people pay more than 30% of their income on housing, which forces them to make difficult choices. Mauthe said, "When people pay too much for housing, this leaves people with very little money left for the other necessities of life – food,

transportation, medical expenses, school supplies, etc. This can mean living from paycheck to paycheck and being just one unexpected expense away from losing a home. Housing Partnership, Homeless Connections, and the Fox Cities Warming Shelter are in the business of preventing this from occurring and being there to assist when the bottom falls out. Our agencies – with a great deal of support from United Way Fox Cities, seek to get involved early. We have new prevention and diversion programs. Our prevention efforts are focused on working with individuals and families to keep them in their home, this includes financial assistance and counseling, cooperation with LEAVEN, and affordable places to live. Diversion: when someone has lost their home and are living with others, we work with them to keep them there instead of coming to shelter.

When someone does become homeless, we offer shelter and transitional housing. This work is critical. Few things can be as traumatic to a child as the instability and fear that comes from not having a home. And we know this childhood trauma stays with a person throughout their life, often repeating itself. This is the beauty of United Way – seeing the big picture in the community, knowing the short-term and long-term impacts, and leveraging a community’s generosity and targeting to the place of greatest impact.”

In 2018 United Way Fox Cities will invest nearly one million dollars in programs that support this goal, providing families with food, shelter, transportation, and development of job and money management skills.

The second goal, helping children reach their full potential, was addressed by Dr. Eileen Jeckot. “As a pediatrician I am a passionate supporter of Reach Out and Read. In our local clinics children receive books at their well-child visits from six months to five years of age. It works well because 91% of all children go to these visits. The first five years of a child’s life are crucial, as 90% of brain development happens during that time. The most obvious benefit is that the child has a book of their own. But it also improves the child’s comfort coming to the doctor, and lets me see the eye-hand coordination and assess fine and gross motor skills. I get a better physical exam, and it brings joy to the day. It is a small investment with an astronomical return.”

The Fox Cities LIFE Study revealed that 53% of third graders in the Fox Cities are not reading at grade level. United Way is investing in eleven programs, including Reach Out and Read that provide early learning opportunities.

Dustin McClone, Co-Chair of the 2018 Community Campaign asked those in attendance, “What does your generosity do? Who does it actually affect? I’m going to ask you right now to take a look at the people around you today. Go ahead, look left and right. Look in front of and behind you. By supporting United Way Fox Cities, one in three of us are positively impacted by supported programs and initiatives. Whether you’ve received a free book for your child at your well child exam, or received financial counseling from FISC, or have had a loved one benefit from taking part in a Memory Café thanks to the Fox Valley Memory Project, the commitment we make today will help drive the success for these and nearly 100 other programs, initiatives and grants in the coming year.”

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

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