This is a story about a stronger, more caring community.

It starts with YOU.

United Way Fox Cities

2020 IMPACT REPORT
A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT: Strength in the midst of a pandemic

This year’s story of resilience, response, and recovery started with you embracing what it truly means to LIVE UNITED — that when we are in it together, we are stronger than ever.

I’m incredibly proud of our collaboration with the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region. Together, we created the COVID-19 Community Response Fund. The fund received more than $1.7 million in gifts and rapidly awarded $1.6 million in grants to 106 nonprofit organizations, and counting.

United Way staff formed and led a COVID-19 Community Solutions Team, now almost 290 individuals strong. The passion and care people brought to the collaboration was evident. More than 80 organizations represented on the team met weekly to respond to ever-changing needs resulting from the crisis, including access to transportation, prescription drugs, hunger relief, child care, health insurance, mental health services, and services to isolated adults.

Our locally-operated United Way 211 Call Center had a record-setting year after being activated statewide by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services in mid-March. 211 answered more than 20,575 calls, texts, and chats in 2020 and continues to offer individuals up-to-the-minute information, hope, and emotional support when they need it most.

In the midst of all of the uncertainty, individuals and companies pitched in generously, resulting in an astounding $8.4 million raised during our Community Campaign. The generous total will allow us to increase anticipated funding to our nonprofit partners that are working hard to provide critical services. In addition, we will reinstate our community granting process in the coming year in an effort to increase our impact in the Fox Cities.

I will be retiring in May after 23 years at United Way Fox Cities. There is no denying the past 12 months presented unique challenges, but I am grateful for what ended up being an incredibly inspiring year. The examples noted here only scratch the surface. I could not be prouder of our community.

I am confident I leave the organization in good hands: Peter Gianopoulos will drive the next stage of community impact as President and CEO at United Way Fox Cities. I know you join me in wishing him great success.

Sincerely,

President and CEO

As the world turned upside down, United Way Fox Cities’ partner programs and initiatives faithfully delivered results and adapted to care for people.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

This is a story about empowering people.

122,622 after-school meals were served to families experiencing hardship during the pandemic.

24,853 rides transported people to vital daily activities like work, medical appointments, and school.

1,810 individuals were sheltered from homelessness or abuse.

Three former residents returned to Pillars Adult & Family Shelter as volunteers to help Christy (shelter staff) serve dinner. All of them took the critical “next step” out of shelter into Pillars’ Single Room Occupancy home, one of several programs that poises people for independence. In March 2020, the home was ready to welcome residents and had a virtual open house because of the pandemic.

57% of clients who participated in United Way-supported programs in 2020 increased their level of income or improved employment, positioning them for more stable housing.

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A young patient eagerly accepted a book from her care provider at Mosaic Family Health. Through Reach Out and Read, children 6 months to 5 years of age receive a free book during each of 10 well-child visits. Despite a reduction in well-child visits due to the pandemic, more than half of the 24 Reach Out and Read clinics in the Fox Cities distributed books at 75-100% of their normal rate. 62,708 books distributed in 2020 through United Way-supported programs promoted healthy brain development by igniting young readers’ imaginations.

In 2020, United Way-supported programs advanced our goal of ensuring children and youth are on track to reach their full potential.

94% of children improved skills needed to recognize and manage their emotions.

6,117 youth found an enriching safe haven at tutoring and after-school programs, even as schools closed.

1,316 young children flourished in quality care, ensuring peace of mind for their working parents who were meeting essential community needs.

At a time many services were forced to close, Samaritan Counseling Center, along with the other nine United Way-supported nonprofit mental health service providers, reimagined their delivery to offer services like telehealth. 93% of patients who engaged in United Way-supported mental health counseling in 2020 reported reduced symptoms.

In 2020, United Way-supported programs advanced our goals of ensuring children, youth, and adults are healthy and children are free of abuse and neglect.

94% of children improved skills needed to recognize and manage their emotions.

1,523 people received knowledgeable assistance and advice when navigating the complex task of enrolling in a health insurance plan.

6,411 people’s faces lit up with healthy smiles and confidence after receiving dental care.

14,069 crisis helpline calls offered solutions and hope to women facing abusive situations.

This is a story about bright futures.

This is a story about hope and healing.
During the pandemic, United Way’s Fox Cities Diaper Bank met community need through increased and uninterrupted service, keeping more than 1,000 local babies dry and healthy each month. In the end, a record-setting total of 452,550 diapers gave local families hope and dignity in 2020. In addition, United Way Fox Cities distributed 888,852 diapers and adult incontinence products donated by Kimberly-Clark Corporation to neighboring communities.

The Connector, a partnership of United Way Fox Cities and Valley Transit, gives rides to those who need affordable transportation outside of normal bus routes or operating hours. In 2020, The Connector provided 15,366 rides; 97% of which helped employees get to work — the highest percentage since its inception.

United Way’s PATH (Providing Access to Healing) for Students serves children through school-based mental health counseling in 32 schools across all 10 Fox Cities’ school districts, allowing 5,371 mental health sessions to occur during the 2019/2020 school year. Within one month of schools closing due to the pandemic, PATH began offering virtual sessions to students, providing stability and a lifeline when needed.

Through Be Well Fox Valley, community partner organizations work together to advance a culture of health and well-being for all. United Way Fox Cities has taken on the role of the backbone organization, leading this collaboration to create the community conditions necessary to improve the well-being of this and future generations. During the 2019-2020 grant period, the Be Well Fox Valley AmeriCorps Program had 14 members serving at 12 host site organizations throughout Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties. The members served 9,173 hours to advance health initiatives and 2,694 hours to help with COVID-19 relief efforts. Learn more: bewellfoxvalley.org

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United Way Fox Cities | 1455 Midway Road | Menasha, WI 54952 | Phone: 920-954-7210 | Fax: 920-954-7209 | unitedwayfoxcities.org

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