



Darrin Senn, 2016 United Way Campaign Chair, presents the Senn Award to Rachel Keniston

UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER

IMPACT IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *"How is a Volunteer like a Crocus?"*

Jan Porath, Executive Director, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley



You can ask anyone what they consider a sign of spring and you will surely hear myriad responses. I don't know of many who trust Punxsutawney Phil and his prognostication or Jimmy the Groundhog after his biting remarks at Sun Prairie's 2015 Ground Hog's Day celebration. Maybe your sign is the sighting of a robin or golfers on your favorite course. For me, a welcoming sight of spring is when I see the hardy crocus braving conditions that most try to avoid and sticking their glorious purple buds through the pesky, lingering snow. Crocus's unexpected appearance is special and unique, lifting spirits and bringing beauty to what seems like a never-ending winter. One might ask, "Why wouldn't the crocus wait until all threats of winter are over?" Rebellious, perhaps. This little marvel of nature taking place in the neighborhood is typically around the time that we, at United Way, are preparing for springtime volunteer recognition activities.

The month of April is nationally recognized as Volunteer Appreciation Month, and April 10-16, 2016 marked National Volunteer Week. United Way partners with University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire students to coordinate Global Youth Service Day held in April. As part of this important month, our United Way produces a comprehensive Volunteer Guide that is distributed in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties throughout the entire year. Additionally, did you know that there is a Chippewa Valley Volunteer Coordinators Association (CVVCA) that cultivates recruitment and awareness of volunteer opportunities? They hold an annual public volunteer fair in April. Marshfield Clinic and WQOW News 18 celebrate the 12 local individuals (you guessed it, in April) who received a Jefferson Award as part of the year-long recognition of "ordinary people, doing extraordinary things". The Jefferson Awards is sometimes called, "The Nobel Peace Prize for Volunteerism."

Like the first signs of spring, volunteering takes on many guises. Again, if you were to ask people you know, the examples would be endless.

Which brings us back to "how is a volunteer like a crocus?" Despite many day-to-day demands outside of volunteering and possible easier paths to be taken, volunteers come through for local nonprofits. Volunteers certainly lift spirits; some bring beauty through their work. Given the right environment, crocus' replicate. Similar to valuable volunteer experiences. Volunteers know like-minded people who will volunteer with them, creating a band of volunteers. Volunteers are a welcomed sight and are a marvel to any organization lucky to have them. In the spirit of National Volunteer Appreciation Month, thank you for your volunteerism, not only in the month of April, but throughout the year.

THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER



CELEBRATING THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY SPIRIT

Business leaders and community leaders recognized at annual banquet



Master of Ceremonies John Murphy begins the evening at the Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards.

The 2016 Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards was yet another special night of appreciation and inspiration. Led by Master of Ceremonies John Murphy of 790 WAYY and Promotions Director for Mid-West

Family Broadcasting, the

dinner and ceremony was truly a community celebration.

The evening itself began with John Murphy making an announcement as everyone took their seats. “We apologize, but there seems to be an issue. How many people here did not get a salad? Please raise your hand.”

At every table, hands went up. “It looks like one quarter of you here didn’t get a salad. Well, we’re sorry, but there just weren’t enough to go around. You’ll have to go without.” John paused a moment. “Sorry. Yes, of course you will get your salad. But please keep in mind that, just as one quarter of you didn’t get your salad, over one in four in our community face the possibility of going without every day.”

As remaining salads were served by The Florian Gardens’ wait staff, John spoke of the effects that food insecurity and financial instability can have on individuals, especially children. Meanwhile, the image of fifty hands raised in a room of 200 people was a clear reminder of just how many in our area are struggling or facing crisis.

United Way Board of Directors Chair Lisa Bruhn of Marshfield Clinic then spoke about United Way’s initiatives that are working to reduce overall need. A few examples mentioned were the new rural playgroups that are reaching out to underserved areas to provide parents and their children support, the new United Way Microgrants offered to CVTC students facing financial difficulties so they can graduate with the training to fill specific skills gaps in our community, and the work being done in the AIM courts to council and support young mothers facing incarceration to get on a positive track and remain in their role as parent.

After dinner, the ceremony began by honoring the volunteers and business community that are the driving force of United Way’s community fundraising campaign. This included recognizing the top 25 business supporters with the Business Best 25 Awards. The **Keystone Award** was presented to **Jamie Kane** of Scheels for her outstanding work as an Employee Campaign Coordinator and all her additional efforts to support United Way and the community.

The **Day of Caring Award** was presented to **Zelies** tree service for their seven-year participation in Day of Caring. Zielies has provided tree trimming and removal services to organizations such as Trinity Equestrian Center, Beaver Creek Reserve, Bolton Refuge House and Boy Scouts, most often working along side Xcel Energy. Brian Woodford, general manager at Zielies, accepted the award.

Mary Steinke accepted the **Spirit of the Chippewa Valley Award** presented to **Huebsch Services** for their ongoing support and dedication to United Way’s campaign, mission and events, as well as their support of many causes and organizations in the Chippewa Valley.

The **Outstanding Emerging Leader Award** was presented to **Nick White** of Live In Eau Claire. Nick’s active involvement and initiative with the Emerging Leaders Society has helped to advance the events, fundraising and impact the society has been able to have in the community.

Drs. Jim & Deb Biegging, who have been heavily involved with the Open Door Clinic since its beginning, were honored with the **Humanitarian Award**. Though they could not be present that night, the Open Door Clinic Board Chair Barb Stevens accepted on their behalf. Jim and Deb meanwhile recorded a special video to address the audience.

The **Nonprofit Excellence Award** was presented to **Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP)** for the amazing amount of work they have accomplished bringing organizations together to address and improve specific health needs in Chippewa County. Rhonda Brown of HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital and director of CHIP accepted the award, which was presented by Michele Paquette of HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital.

The **Senn Award** is a special award established by Steve and Kaye Senn to honor nonprofit professionals for excellence in leadership. This year, the award was presented to **Rachel Keniston**, who recently retired as executive director of The Community Table. Lynn Standorf, current executive director of The Community Table, presented the award along with Darrin Senn, who represented the Senn family.

It was an evening of inspirational stories and people, an occasion that represented our community united by the idea of making our Chippewa Valley stronger. United Way thanks everyone who contributed to the 2016 Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards, and all that they do to support our community.

Not able to attend? See a complete video:

www.youtube.com/uwgcw

Visit our Facebook photo gallery:

www.facebook.com/uwgcw

GOING THE DISTANCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Roy Sargeant has expansive experience serving communities near and far

It's obvious from the first moment anyone has the pleasure of speaking with Roy Sargeant that he is not from the Chippewa Valley—the London, England accent is a dead giveaway. What the accent doesn't reveal, however, is the vast experience he has had serving communities across three countries and many diverse cities.

Roy was born and raised in London. His mother was a psychiatric nurse, and he had an older cousin who volunteered in Bolivia. Both of these people would help to influence the direction of his life.

After graduating from Hull University in northern England, he opted to volunteer in what was then British Honduras (now Belize) in South America. For three years, he taught geography and English in a college sponsored by a Methodist mission while he lived with a local family. It was there that he met his wife, Jeanne, who had been a Peace Corps volunteer from Denver, Colorado and was teaching science.

Roy and Jeanne married and lived the next five years back in England. During that time, he returned to school to receive his master's degree in social work. He worked as a trainee psychiatric social worker at North Wales Psychiatric Hospital, which offered both in-patient care and out-patient clinical care. "It was a really nice experience and a really nice place to live," Roy recalls. "We lived in a 900-year-old stone cottage that was named in the Domesday Book." The Domesday Book was compiled back in 1086 by order of William I and was a comprehensive record of land values and liabilities in England at the time.

During this period, however, Roy and Jeanne had some interest in moving to America. Roy's brother-in-law and his family were living in Madison, Wisconsin while he went to law school, and he suggested Wisconsin. "Not knowing anything about the climate or anything like that," Roy says with a chuckle. So, Roy would sit in their 900-year-old North Wales cottage reading a monthly newspaper put out by the National Association of Social Workers to scan Wisconsin job postings.

This led to them moving to Medford, Wisconsin in 1976 and Roy taking a psychiatric social worker position in the Human Services Department of Taylor County. In the next four-plus years there, Roy discovered his interest shifting to supervision and administration. When a mental health coordinator position opened up in St. Croix County, they moved again and he spent three years in that position. Yet another move

followed when Roy took the position of executive director of Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center in Winona, Minnesota, a nonprofit organization that served three counties.

Then, Roy and Jeanne adopted two children, which spurred in them the idea to relocate, and Seattle was their next destination. "That became my first contact with United Way because I was hired as the Executive Director of an organization called The Crisis Clinic, which serves Seattle and King County." The Crisis Clinic is a 24-hour crisis hotline and a long-time program partner of United Way of King County.

Roy remembers his drives to work from the south side of Seattle to the northside fondly. "Driving on I-5, and then you look, and you've got the snow-capped mountains of the Cascades here, and you look this way and you've got the snow-capped mountains of the Olympic Peninsula."

Somehow, besides the demands of being an executive director for a large nonprofit organization, Roy also found time to enroll at the University of Washington to earn his Masters of Business Administration. In the five years he was at the Crisis Clinic, however, Roy also learned that certain aspects of the nonprofit world, such as fundraising and event planning, weren't geared to his interests in the same way as other human service administration roles. That and the fact that Seattle's

expenses and rapid growth weren't suiting them made him and Jeanne pursue a different location.

So, was this when they finally ended up in the greater Chippewa Valley? "Well," Roy says, "there was one more stop."

That stop was Idaho, a state where all human services aren't run by the counties, but by the state through a network of services. Roy became the Chief of the Bureau of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in Boise. In this position, he worked closely with the legislature. It was their home for about ten years until, in 2003, Roy and Jeanne finally returned to Wisconsin when he took the director position for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services and called the Chippewa Valley home.

It was in late 2012 that the United Way Health Advisory Council was formed, and Roy was a volunteer member from the start. At that time, Roy saw the opportunity as a way for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services to broaden its connections to the community and find opportunities for innovation. Roy also explains that, "[United Way's] emphasis on outcomes and results was very consistent with what we

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Roy Sargeant, Health Advisory Council member and past chair.

THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER

Roy Sargeant - continued

were doing in Eau Claire County,” Roy says.

By November of 2013, Roy became chair of the Health Advisory Council, using his experience and knowledge to provide invaluable leadership. For Roy, his involvement on the health council was also extremely useful to him as director of Health and Human Services. “It was a great way to get out of the office, get to know other programs and services in the community and to understand more the network of services and their needs. [I could] look for opportunities for partnering with other agencies.”

Roy retired from the county in 2015, and retired from the health council chair position shortly after, though he remains as a council member and involved with United Way. “The Community Health Initiative is very exciting, and to see that move forward . . . I was fortunate, I came in at a time when the advisory council was being formed, and was involved in the development and creation of the plan.”

The council members had a pivotal role in the grant review process, which included visiting the program sites applying for funding. This left a strong impression on Roy. “Being involved with the site visits, for me, was just an outstanding experience. It really reminded me that, until you’ve gone to an agency and seen what it is like and what work is being done with often very, very limited resources, you really aren’t in a position to evaluate the work that’s being done. So that’s

what keeps me [on the council]—feeling that I’m involved in something that’s moving forward and going in the right direction.”

Roy’s continued involvement with the United Way Community Health Initiative is also a clear example of Roy taking ownership and responsibility for the community he lives in. “Having been involved over a period of time—including serving as chair of the council—I’ve felt that as long as I continue to live in the community, I’m interested in seeing things move forward. And I think a great deal has been accomplished. You have a great team of people here and it’s just been very enjoyable to be a part of it.”

United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley is fortunate to have such amazing council members like Roy whose dedication and service to this community help to make the Chippewa Valley stronger.



VOLUNTEER GUIDE GROWS IN SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

More organizations listed and greater number printed for 2016



Thanks to additional sponsorships, the 2016 United Way Volunteer Guide will see 300 additional copies printed, increasing the total to 1000. In addition, the guide features volunteer opportunities from 84 organizations, up from 77 organizations last year.

“The increase in printing will help us meet the increasing demand in the community,” says James Peters, director of marketing for United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley. “The seven hundred printed last year were gone in nine month’s time.” The expectation is for the 1,000 printed this year to carry through an entire calendar year.

In addition, added to this year’s guide are public service ads to educate the community on supporting early childhood development, financial stability, mental health and physical health. This messaging is in addition to the large-scale public service messaging United Way is promoting via television, radio, newspapers and magazines in the area.

United Way thanks the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County, IDEXX Laboratories, Jake and Peg Leinenkugel, UnitedHealthcare and Xcel Energy for their support of the 2016 United Way Volunteer Guide.

To view the Volunteer Guide online, visit:

- uwgcv.org/volunteer

Or, stop by our United Way office to pick up a Volunteer Guide at:
3603 N. Hastings Way, Suite 200, Eau Claire



FOOD DRIVE AIMS TO BREAK ALL-TIME RECORD

The national goal is to collect over 77.1 million pounds of food to break 2011 totals

Stamp Out Hunger, the national one-day food drive organized by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and supported in part by United Way, is the largest single-day food drive in the world. It always occurs on the 2nd Saturday in May, which this year is May 14th.

The drive is orchestrated by local post offices who collect the food and manage its distribution. Food collected in a community stays local. In Chippewa and Eau Claire counties, Feed My People Food Bank, St. Francis Food Pantry, and the Salvation Army Food Pantry are some of its largest recipients.

Nationwide in 2011, Stamp Out Hunger collected the largest amount of food ever—77.1 million pounds. This year, Stamp Out Hunger organizers have set a goal to surpass this amount and have 2016 be a record year of collection.



Huebsch Services collected almost 600 pounds of food during their Stamp Out Hunger workplace drive in 2015.

For the Chippewa Valley to do its part, the community just needs to keep doing what it's been doing for the last several years. Collections in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties have been on the increase since 2014. Last year, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley saw a large increase in workplace campaign drives. Sixteen businesses in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties collected a total of 1300 pounds of food and over 1000 dollars in donations. Dollars are encouraged as an alternative to food donations, since food pantries can purchase 10 dollars of food with every one dollar they receive.

What to donate:

The most in-demand food products that pantries look for is canned meats, peanut butter, and other sources of protein. Canned soups, fruits and vegetables are also always welcome.

Dry goods such as pastas and cereals are also good to donate, including premixed dinners like macaroni and cheese and Hamburger Helper. Condiments in plastic containers are useful, from ketchup to salad dressings and mayonnaise. Juices in plastic containers (or juice boxes) are also accepted.

As long as it is an unopened, non-expired and nonperishable item, Stamp Out Hunger will collect it and the local food pantries and the

people they serve will be thankful.

What not to donate

Please do not donate any opened or expired food item.

Please do not donate any perishable item (fresh fruits, meats, eggs, dairy or frozen items).

Please avoid glass containers. These can break easily and put the safety of postal carriers and volunteers at risk.



Volunteers unload a truckload of collected food at The Salvation Army Thrift Store in Chippewa Falls.

How else can you help?

United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley recruits volunteers each year to help with food collection in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties. Volunteers will be sent out to area neighborhoods to collect any bags left at mailboxes. This help is crucial so that Postal Carriers have less of a burden as they also collect food items and deliver the mail.

Volunteering for Stamp Out Hunger is fun and fulfilling, and requires only a vehicle, driver's license and enough space to place collected food items. Children are also welcome if accompanied by an adult. Groups of two to four work best, with one acting as driver and the rest working as collectors.

Drop off areas are located in different parts of Eau Claire, and food collected in Chippewa Falls is dropped off at The Salvation Army Food Pantry.

How You Can Help:

- Donate your dry and canned goods on May 14th for your postal carrier to pick up at your mailbox.
- Plan a food drive at your workplace.
- Volunteer to help the letter carriers on the day of the event

Visit www.uwgcv.org/stamp-out-hunger for more information and to volunteer or run a drive.

THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER

COUNCIL FORMED TO ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS ISSUES

Community experts from two counties brought together to develop strategies



United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley has established the Basic Needs Advisory Council (BNAC) to address the immediate and basic needs of individuals living in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties. Those needs include food, shelter, clothing, medical care, dental care, and access to services (including transportation). By bringing together area professionals from both counties who have expertise in serving the basic needs of the community, the goal is to develop more effective strategies to serve those in our community who are in immediate need, and to seek out stronger collaborations with organizations.

The BNAC began meeting in January of 2016. The Chair is Dr. Marc Goulet, Interim Dean in the College of Arts & Sciences and a Professor of Mathematics from UW-EC, and the Vice-Chair is Emily Moore, Executive Director of the Feed My People Food Bank. Complete council membership is listed below:

During February and March, members of the BNAC completed Site Conversations for the 17 programs that receive funding in the Basic Needs category. The BNAC members are currently in the process of presenting what they learned about the programs during the monthly meetings. Their next task is to start preparing an agenda and timeline for what they want to accomplish during this upcoming year.



A Basic Needs Advisory Council meeting in March of 2016.

Dr. Marc Goulet (Chair)

Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of Mathematics, University of Wisconsin--Eau Claire

Emily Moore (Vice-Chair)

Executive Director, Feed My People Food Bank

Kathy Manor

Supervisor for Low Income Assistance, Xcel Energy

Jennifer Owen

Director of the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County

Tom Wagener

Transit Manager, Eau Claire Transit

Roberta Rasmus

Volunteer, Open Door Clinic

Kelly Lee

Food Coordinator, Agnes's Table

Jeni Haddad

Director, Domestic Violence Program, Family Support Center

Mike Cohoon

Associate Pastor, Landmark Christian Church

Kira Blake

Community Development Case Manager, Goodwill Industries

Dave Gordon

Board Chair, Legacy Community Center and Board Member, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMS THAT RECEIVE UNITED WAY FUNDING

American Red Cross, Western Wisconsin Chapter

- Disaster Cycle Services
- Service to Armed Forces

Bolton Refuge House

- Crisis intervention Services

Catholic Charities

- Basic Needs Support
- Sojourner House - Shelter for Homeless Adults

Chippewa County Housing Authority

- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance

Center for Independent Living

- Volunteer Caregiver Program

Chippewa Valley Free Clinic

- Free Clinic Health Care Services

Chippewa Valley Technical College

- CVTC Dental Clinic

The Community Table

- Strong Families and Individuals

Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association

- Rent Assistance
- Rice Pantry

Eau Claire Interfaith Hospitality Network

- Sheltering for Homeless Families (Beacon House)

Great Rivers 2-1-1

- Information, referral and crisis hotline

The Open Door Clinic

- Basic Needs – Medical and Prescription Services

Positive Alternatives

- TeenCare Crisis Intervention

West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency (West CAP)

- Homeless Prevention Program

Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council

- Housing First



HELPING SENIORS AGE WELL

L.E. Phillips Senior Center begins Active Living Everyday program as part of United Way health initiative



On an average day, take a trip downtown to L.E. Phillips Senior Center, and you'll find it a challenge just getting a parking spot within a block of the building. It's a popular place. So much so, they have expanded

several times in their history to accommodate the increasing senior population they serve.

When the Senior Center first began back in 1976, it was part of the county government. The "center" at that time was just a small room in what was then the Eau Claire County offices in the building directly across from the public library (currently Hope Gospel Mission). When the county moved into the larger courthouse building in 1988, it sold the building to a group of seniors for one dollar. This allowed the center opportunities for growth and service to more people.

Over time, however, building accessibility and parking became an increasing issue. It was apparent to area residents that a new senior center was a necessity. "It wasn't just elderly citizens," Explains Mary Pica Anderson, executive director of L.E. Phillips Senior Center for ten years now, "it was active community participants who got together and decided this community needed a senior center."

The first financial support to go toward a new center came from the L.E. Phillips Family Foundation. Then, the City of Eau Claire granted a city block to the concept and had the old buildings that had stood there torn down to make room for a senior center. This senior center would be a not-for-profit organization, and in 1995, the current L.E. Phillips Senior Center was built after a successful capital campaign.

By 2011, parking had once again become an issue that needed to be addressed. Additional fundraising and a significant grant from L.E. Phillips Foundation allowed them to purchase adjacent properties and use the land to double their parking capacity by the end of 2012. Today, L.E. Phillips Senior Center continues to grow as a thriving community center.

"If I were to tell you what is still the number-one issue?" Mary says wryly. "Parking." She gives a light laugh.

One look at the Senior Center's monthly online calendar begins to offer a reason for its popularity—card games like Sheephead and Euchre, computer and language classes, dancing, cooking, art and music, crafts, and many other classes and activities. On the surface, events and programs at the Senior Center are fun ways for people from age 50 to 99-plus to get together and share each other's company while doing interesting things. And all this is true. But it is also so much more.

What drives the overall mission of the senior center is recognizing two key points: that seniors want to age well, and they want to continue to learn. The center serves these goals by always being conscious and aware of the needs of the aging population. "They just didn't retire and shut their brains off," Mary says. "They have a thirst for continuing knowledge, so the educational programs and senior opportunities that we have are very much driven by their interests."

Mary has been at the Senior Center for ten years. She was born and raised in a very small town called Redgranite, Wisconsin. "I came to the area to teach school, then fell in love working with health and wellness, which led me to the YMCA." Eventually, Mary's continued interest in overall well-being brought her to the senior center.

"For me, coming to the senior center . . . was a real interest not just in physical health and wellness, but the full mental health and wellness of the aging population." Depression and mental health can become serious problems as we age. Social interaction is enormous to the mental health of individuals, and this is an important function the senior center serves. "Being able to associate and socialize with people of their age and having a place to go during the day is tremendous for warding off depression." Mental health can in turn affect the physical health of individuals, and increase the risk of chronic disease.

When L.E. Phillips Senior Center began learning from seniors that the loneliest day of the week they



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THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER

L.E. Phillips Senior Center - continued

faced was Sunday, the center started holding board games and card games on at least one Sunday a month.

Physical health and well-being is another key element to the senior center program. The programs and services available range from nutrition, bone health classes and cancer recovery to exercise programs, line dancing and an exercise room. There can be certain assumptions that getting older means your overall health and strength will only weaken, but the fact is, no matter how old you are, science is showing that you can improve your physical well-being, be it cardiovascular, muscle strength or flexibility.

One particular program Mary had been hoping to initiate at L.E. Phillips Senior center for many years is the Active Living Every Day program. Beginning in July of 2015, this program was incorporated into the senior center's model as part of United Way's Community Health Initiative. This evidence-based program was designed by Steven N. Blair, PED and Andrea L. Dunn, PhD to identify what is preventing individuals from being active and building activities into their day. It has been incorporated into many of the senior center's programs, not just physical programs.

"With this population, we know it doesn't just make them feel better, it has a tremendous amount of residual effects. People who are on medication often find that they are able to reduce their medication or no longer have to take medication at all. That's a tremendous expense return to their pocket book." It can also mean fewer doctor



A recent cooking demonstration at the senior center offers nutritious recipes and cooking tips to local seniors.

visits, reduced chance or greater control of chronic conditions, increased independence, and mental health and well-being.

Mary feels strongly that the typical senior has embraced the concept of growing old and honors it. They see it as a privilege and they want to age well. That includes both the mental and physical aspect.

The Active Living Everyday program aligns with United Way's Community Health initiative by educating and promoting healthy behaviors that will reduce rates of chronic disease and support mental well-being to a specific population facing elevated risks. And it is a population that, in the next 30 years, will be growing substantially. "Ten thousand people turn 65 every day," Mary says to emphasize the fact.

Maintaining good health as we grow older will be an essential element in ensuring our Chippewa Valley will be stronger, and the Active Living Everyday program is a proven strategy to accomplish this.

IN BRIEF

- **United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley** welcomes **Kathy Cooper** to the community impact department. Kathy is the **volunteer network coordinator** for Successful Children's Network and her part-time position was made possible by a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation. Kathy has a bachelor of science degree in Early Childhood Education and has worked as a learning therapist at the Northwest Reading Clinic for the past 12 years. Kathy is already applying her skills and knowledge to building a volunteer program to support our Successful Children's Network programming.
- **Healthy Communities** welcomes the public to attend their free **Eau Claire Healthy Communities Annual Event** on Thursday, April 28 from 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. at the CVTC Energy Education Center. Help them celebrate 20 years of accomplishments in the community and participate in an interactive session around health disparities facilitated by Beth Hartung. To learn more, visit www.echealthycommunities.org, or call 715-839-2869.
- The **Wisconsin Dental Association** and **WDA Foundation** is hosting a free dental clinic known as **Mission of Mercy (M.O.M.)** on June 17 and 18 at the Menards Convention Center in Eau Claire. Volunteers are needed for set up and tear down. They are also in need of dentists, dental hygienists, assistants as well as people to help with patient registration, patient ambassadors, sterilization, data entry, crowd control, sanitation engineers, help with hospitality, and volunteer registration to name a few. For more information and to volunteer, visit www.wda.org/wda-foundation/mission-of-mercy, or call Carol Shoemaker at 414-755-4188.
- **Family Resource Center** in Eau Claire is now a **breast milk depot** as part of **Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes**. After an application and screening process, breast milk can be donated and stored at Family Resource Center in Oakwood Mall, Eau Claire, and distributed to neonatal intensive care units for struggling newborns. If you are able and interested in donating, call 847-262-5134 for an initial phone screening by an outreach coordinator and to begin the application process.

NORTHWESTERN BANK KEEPS FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Community involvement and investment is at the core of its mission

In 1883, Daniel E. Seymour erected a magnificent brick structure in Chippewa Falls on the corner of Central and Bridge Street. This was Seymour Bank, and was the precursor to Northwestern Bank's history.

Seymour Bank didn't survive the Panic of 1893 and closed its doors. In 1904, P.T. Favell organized what would be known as Northwestern State Bank at that location. In 1924, that building was torn down to allow for an expanded Northwestern State Bank, which was completed in 1925.

The Great Depression of 1929 once again threatened this location. "In '31, we went down for about 9 months," says Jerry Jacobson, president of Northwestern Bank. "Mr. Joas was the president here at that time and he went out and recouped the capital from a lot of essentially Tilden and Eagle Point farmers. A lot of those are still our shareholders."



1962 saw an extensive expansion and remodel of the building that still stands today as the headquarters of Northwestern Bank. It is a widely-held community bank with about 220 shareholders,

made up of about 88 families. "No one's a large shareholder, so it's all spread around to various individuals in the community," Jerry says.

Northwestern Bank has additional locations in Chippewa Falls, and locations in Eau Claire, Cornell, Boyd and Thorp. Jill Herriges, marketing and customer relations representative for Northwestern Bank, sees these locations as an advantage for community outreach and impact. "We're in a variety of locations, so that's great. We are the Chippewa Valley."

Northwestern Bank offers convenient personal banking options that fulfill the financial needs of many Chippewa Valley residents. Recognizing that business is a cornerstone of the community, Northwestern Bank specializes in commercial lending, especially small business lending. Over one hundred years of history the Chippewa Valley has demonstrated a clear model of success for the bank in how they serve their customers. Also important to their model and mission, however, is investing back in their community through philanthropy, advocacy and volunteerism.

"We have to make money, because if we don't make money for the shareholders, none of us will be around," says Jerry. "But a community bank needs to exist—because of that word, 'community'—to do whatever we can to help [our community] out, otherwise it's just a financial

institution, and we don't want to be that ... If we can make a better community, everyone benefits—including the bank."

Denise Boos, assistant vice president of human resources for Northwestern Bank, has worked for area nonprofits in her past and was already familiar with Northwestern Bank through its support and impact on those organizations. "When I joined the Northwestern Bank team, I knew what culture, what values I was walking into because I'd been on the receiving end of that and now I'm able to be on the giving end of it."

One example of this is the bank's support of the Confluence Project. Jerry is the president of the Eau Claire Arts Council and committed to making sure that the arts center is completed and open in 2018. Northwestern Bank has also supported the project financially. "What we're looking at, what I'm looking at, is a regional project to try to keep our youth in the Chippewa Valley. We're putting a lot of efforts into it to make sure that it succeeds, and it will succeed."

Northwestern Bank has also been a significant supporter of Irvine Park and its continued development. Jerry, again, has had a significant role in fundraising as committee co-chairman to see that development through. He recognizes the importance of a free, quality park and zoo like Irvine so that any family in the community can enjoy it.

Other community-based projects being supported by Northwestern Bank include the Ice Dreams Project to expand the Chippewa Falls Ice Arena and offer the community a free ice rink for children to play hockey, as well as the Erickson Park Project on Glen Loch that will provide handicapped fishing access. There is also heavy involvement with the area foundations which helps Northwestern Bank sustain their investments in the future of the community.

Northwestern Bank employees are no less involved in community activities, and take ownership of all they do to support area causes. Jill explains how she is in a position where she can see the level of support from staff as volunteers and donors. "It's exemplary how much we're



THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER

Northwestern Bank- continued

out there, whether it's supporting American Cancer Society, Jim Falls Lions, Chippewa Falls Lions..."

"The Chamber..." Denise adds. "Relay for life is another big one that our employees get involved with."

The list is large, and also includes Bowl for Kids' Sake for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Oktoberfest, Junior Achievement, Agnes' Table, Chippewa Pals, and many more. In 2015, Denise says that employees had over nineteen hundred hours of volunteer time logged.

"And it's interesting," Jerry says, "that really has nothing to do with management, that's all them. They have monthly meals, they sell candy bars and all sorts of things. Management does nothing on that part. Yeah, we write out a check to support it, certainly, but they raise a significant amount of money just from the employees themselves."

This deep community involvement is encouraged by bank management and creates a culture that pervades the bank. "Management leads by example," Denise says.

For all this community support, it comes as little surprise that Northwestern Bank is also one of United Way's top 25 supporters. In fact, the bank's support of United Way likely goes all the way back to the beginning of the organization. Jerry started at Northwestern Bank in 1978. Bill Pickerign, who started at the bank in 1964 and was Jerry Jacobson's predecessor, was a United Way of Chippewa County Campaign Chair. Jerry was a campaign chair in 1997.

Northwestern Bank's involvement with United Way ranges from their company campaign to event sponsorships such as the Golf Tournament and the 50th Anniversary Gala. Jerry Kuehl, senior vice president of sales and marketing is previous campaign chair and a Leadership Circle signer along with Jerry Jacobson. Their support of United Way is rooted in the concept of supporting and strengthening the community as a whole.

Jerry puts particular emphasis on United Way's Successful Children's Network to ensure healthy early childhood development and school readiness. He mentions a conversation he had with Chippewa County Circuit Court Judge Roderick Cameron, who was first elected to the position in 1984. Judge Cameron had mentioned to Jerry that if the community doesn't support a path of success for disadvantaged children by the time they get to grade school, it's too late. Coming from a judge who has served through three generations of our community's population, this resonated deeply with Jerry. "It's great that United Way is giving that effort to help them."

Jerry concludes by saying, "Everyone at Northwestern Bank realizes how important United Way is to the Chippewa Valley. Now even more so, I think, because ... [United Way is] trying to get at the core root of the problem ... Unless you get at the root of the problem, you just keep putting money at sustaining and not improving."

And, for Jerry and the entire Northwestern Bank team, that gets to the heart of what Northwestern Bank has always tried to do as part of their community—ensure everybody has the best chance to enjoy their life and fulfilled here in the Chippewa Valley.



(From left) Jill Herriges and Denise Boos of Northwestern Bank

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PLOTTING THE RIGHT COURSE

Adjusting to a change in life leads to redirection of career

By Nona Buchholz, Director of Accounting and Operations,
United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

Life is a journey and can change at any moment. We see a vision of what we think our life will be and where our journey will take us but sometimes abrupt changes happen to change the course of our journey. After losing my

husband to a very short battle with cancer, I experienced an abrupt change. My daughter had completed college and found a great job a couple of hours away. My son was nearing the end of college and I was pretty sure his degree would take him to a bigger city. What now is my new journey in life? I had to come up with another vision. What do I want to do with the rest of my life?

It took me seven years to figure it all out. I needed to stay in Eau Claire as I live between my son and daughter. Also with my parents and in-laws in their 80s, I need to be around to help them in their journey. I have found this to be one of the biggest challenges but very rewarding as they have been there for me all my life and now it is my time to give back to them. I knew I wanted to give back to my community but I could not decide what it would be. We all do little things through our employees and organizations but I wanted a change.

The first big decision I made was I did not need a four-bedroom home and it was time to downsize. It was not easy to sort through many years of my life but it was time, and last year I moved into a smaller home. My next big decision was employment. After working 20-plus years for the same employer and doing the type of work I love to do it was time to make a change. March of last year I started at United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley as the Director of Accounting and Operations. Having worked in the private sector for many years, joining a non-profit organization is very different. I love the employee attitudes; they love what they are doing and are

very dedicated to their cause. They are all hard workers, work well with others, and you don't see the slackers like you do in larger companies. For the last eight years I have thought a lot about doing more service work but could not decide what the right thing for me would be. A lot of my time is spent with aging relatives so I have not been willing to make a full commitment to any one thing. Working at United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley has helped with my desire for wanting to give back to my community. My eyes have really been opened to see so many of the challenges we have here in the Chippewa Valley and what we are doing along with so many others in the community to help solve some of these challenges.

Now that we are fully staffed at UWGCV, we are able to concentrate on education, income, health and basic needs. I love our weekly meeting where I am able to hear what everyone is doing in their area

and working together with so many others in the community to try to make a stronger Chippewa Valley. The general public has no idea all the wonderful programs and all the talented volunteers that work so hard for the Chippewa Valley. One person cannot solve all the major problems, but when you put a team together—all from different programs—and collaborate, there is a greater possibility of solving major problems. We are lucky to live in an area where so many people care about their community.

Working with the campaign I see how campaign dollars can grow. Each employee pledges what they are able to afford, no dollar amount is too little, and when you total all those dollars it is amazing how those dollars grow. If every company in the Chippewa Valley ran a campaign we would have an opportunity to solve so many problems in our community. Sometimes all it takes is just asking. When someone is asked to do something, they are likely to do it. If they are not asked, the opportunity is lost. Let's all rally the support of others to help reach our goal so we can all help make the Chippewa Valley a stronger place to live!

"I knew I wanted to give back to my community but I could not decide on what it would be. We all do little things through our employees and organizations but I wanted a change."

UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY - AUGUST



MAY

Stamp Out Hunger

Saturday, May 14

Leave nonperishable food items at your mailbox for your mail carrier or volunteer to pick up. Volunteer to help pick up donated items. Help us ensure local food pantries can meet the summer demand. Learn more at:

www.uwgcv.org/stamp-out-hunger

JUNE

Emerging Leaders Foot Golf

Thursday, June 16, 2016

*Fairway Farms, W6305 Langdell Road, Eau Claire
Lunch @ Noon, Tourney @ 1:00 P.M.*

Emerging Leaders welcome players for the 2nd annual Foot Golf Tournament. It's just like golf, except you're kicking soccer balls. Last year's fast-paced, fun and exciting day was a big hit! Any skill level can play.

\$40 per person or \$120 for a team of three.

Register at: www.uwgcv.org/footgolf

AUGUST

28th Annual United Way Golf Tournament

Monday, August 15

Lake Wissota Golf, Chippewa Falls

Join us as we once again gather at Lake Wissota Golf for the Annual United Way Golf Tournament, one of the premier and longest-running tournaments in our area!

www.uwgcv.org/golf

News, events and much more are waiting for you at: WWW.UWGCV.ORG



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THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY WILL BE STRONGER

April, 2016 Issue